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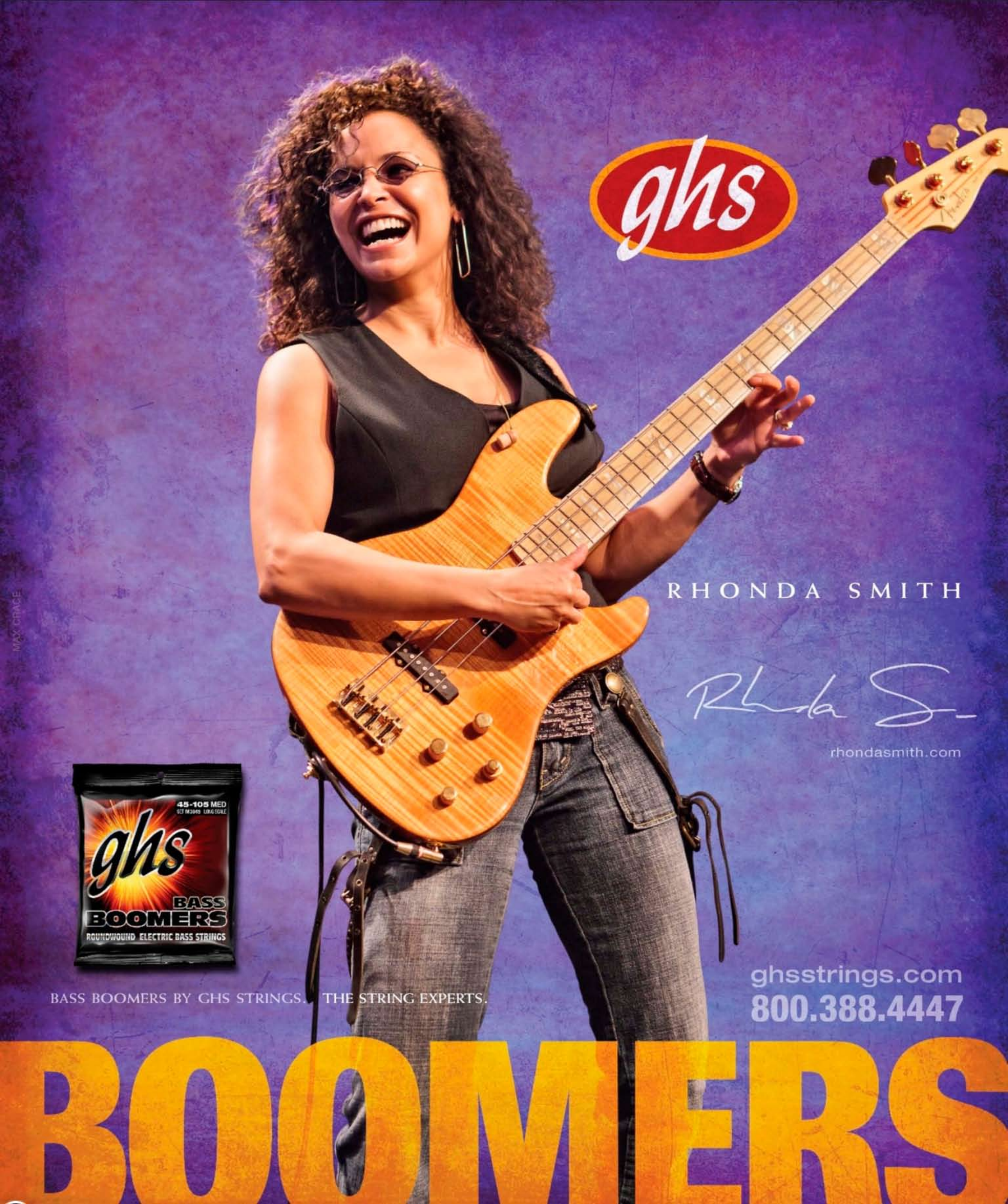
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Cover photo & this page by Ross Halfin

BASS PLAYER (ISSN 1050-785X) is published monthly with an extra issue in November by NewBay Media LLC, 1111 Bayhill Drive, Suite 125, San Bruno, CA 94066. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Bruno, CA and at additional mailing offices. Canadian GST No. R13288078, Customer No. 2116057, Agreement No. 40011901. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Bass Player, Box 469069, Escondido, CA 92046.

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Bass Player, 1111 Bayhill Drive, Suite 125, San Bruno, CA 94066
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Subscription orders, inquiries, address changes, and Back Issues:
Bass Player, P.O. Box 469069, Escondido, CA 92046-9069. For quickest service, telephone: 800-234-1831 or (760) 291-1537. bassplayer@pcspublink.com

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COMMUNITY

LOWDOWN

BRIAN FOX, EDITOR

Give A Little Bit

WE HAVE LOTS OF GREAT STUFF FOR YOU IN THIS ISSUE OF BASS PLAYER, AND I HOPE you each get lots of mileage from this month's news, features, reviews, and lessons. But first, a personal plea. . . . As we were putting the finishing touches on this issue, Hurricane Sandy was absolutely decimating the coastal neighborhoods of New York and New Jersey. (Of course, before the storm made landfall on American soil, it brought death and devastation to many parts of the Caribbean, as well.) Just as our East Coast friends, family, and co-workers were beginning to assess the destruction, a second storm came in the form of a Nor'easter, compounding the misery across the region.

What does this have to do with playing bass? Everything. Whether you play 4-string or 11-string, electric or upright, djent or jazz, you are a human being with a heart, a soul, and a brain. It doesn't take much of any to realize that we should help those in need. Some good people regularly give to charities of various types. I'm a little ashamed to admit I'm never been one of those people. But I have contributed to efforts to help those affected by Sandy at home and abroad, and I ask that you do, to.

With that, I'll step off my soapbox and invite you to lose yourself a little bit in these pages. For me, playing bass is a wonderful escape from some of the ickier things in life. So is making a magazine about it. So thank you, and enjoy.

COURT OF OPINION

If you had to pick a single effect pedal for your signal chain, what would it be?

Electro-Harmonix Big Muff. Sleaze tone, kidney-punching articulation, and Satanic, spleen-melting sustain. \M/
—Geoff Lierse

Tech 21 SansAmp Bass Driver.
—Scott Powers

Boss GT-10B. Okay, I'm being greedy.
—Sean Lowe

Malekko Barker Assmaster fuzz/distortion.
—Ralph Benitez

Aguilar Tone Hammer DI. I never play without it.
—Fritz Marial

A remote volume control connected to the guitar player's rig.
—Ken Conaway

Verellen Meatsmoke preamp pedal.
—Frank Abruzzo

Way Huge Swollen Pickle.
—Jarrett Palmer

The BlameShifter.
—Tom Fillman

Darkglass Electronics Microtubes B3K.
—Daniel Gonzalez

BBE Sonic Stomp.
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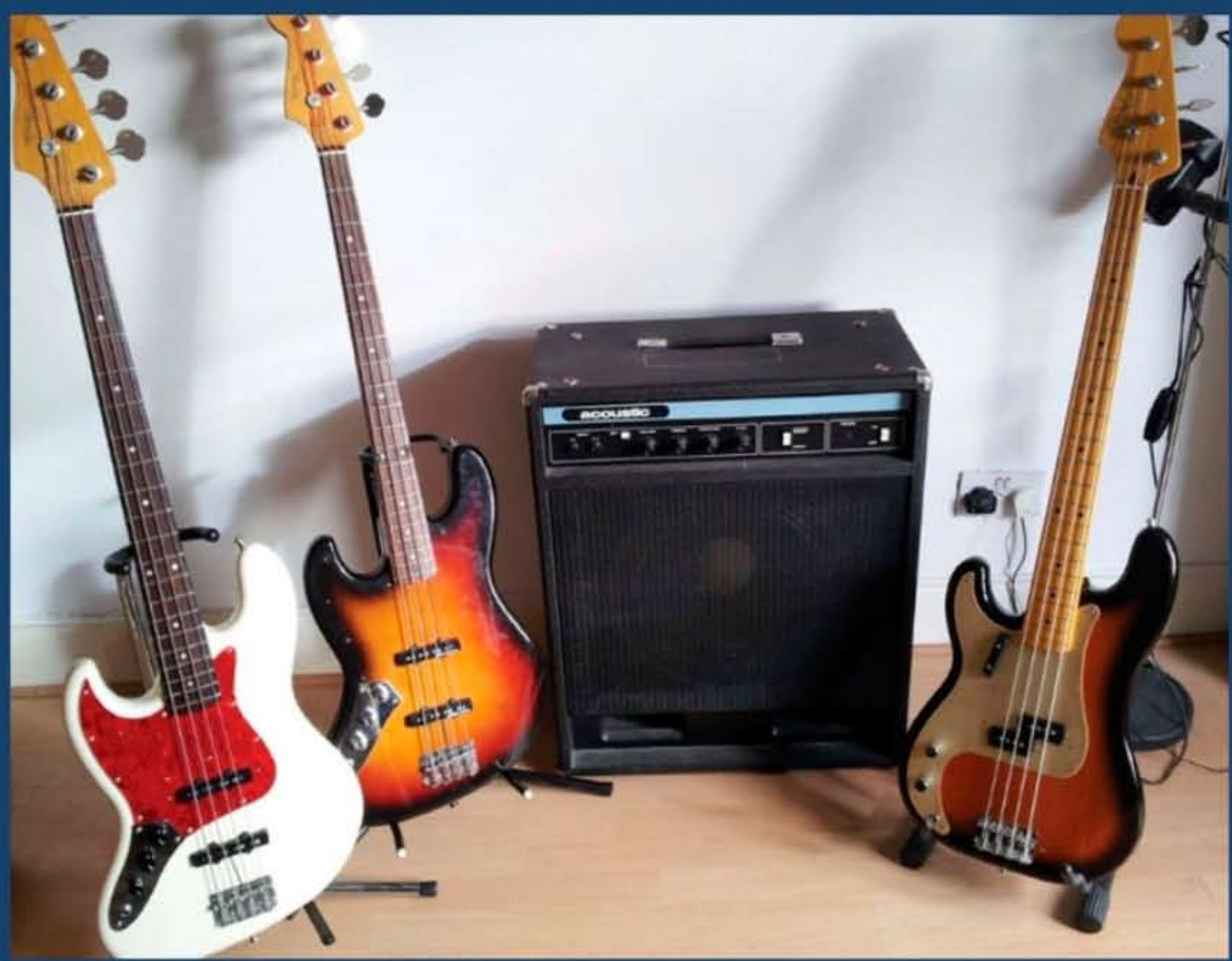
MXR M87 Bass Compressor.
—Jason Peteux Cyr

DIG MY RIG



HOW ABOUT SOME LEFTIES!

I suppose my current setup is a bit of a blast from the past. The combo is a blackface Acoustic 118 with a 15" speaker in a ported cab. It may not be much to look at, but this amp pushes some serious air and is a veteran of hundreds of gigs—small, medium, and large.

This old sentinel guards my trio of Japanese Fenders. On the left are two '62 Reissue Jazz Basses. The white one has been modified with DiMarzio pickups. The sunburst model has had Seymour Duncan pickups fitted, its pickguard removed, and chrome controls fitted in a temporary tribute to the great Jaco. On the right is my '57 Reissue Precision, upgraded with a Kent Armstrong pickup and a gold anodized pickguard. It definitely has an old-school look and sound, but it's perfect for my current bass-playing duties. —STEVEN CRAWFORD

Got a rig you think we'd dig? Email a photo and a description to digmyrig@gmail.com.

THE REAL WORLD

Tori "Trikki" Dozier

Home base Hollywood, CA
Occupation Bass player
Basses Schecter Stiletto Studio 5, Ibanez SG605 5-string, Ibanez SRA550, Jay Turser JTAB acoustic bass guitar, Fender Marcus Miller Jazz Bass
Rig Acoustic B200H with B410 stack, Peavey 6505+ Patriotic head and Headliner 115 cab
Effects Zoom 708 II, Boss CH-1 Super Chorus
Strings Elixir Strings, DR Strings Neon (pink)
Heroes & inspiration T.M. Stevens, Prince, Louis Johnson, Marcus Miller, Bernard Edwards, Larry Graham, Billy Sheehan, my son Krash, and God!
Contact cinnamonfunk@rocketmail.com

How did you come to play bass?

I was very reluctant to play bass. I thought bass players got no love and that it was too easy! Man, was I wrong. I was a guitar player for 15 years by the time I moved to L.A., and when I would audition, nine times out of ten they would ask me if I could play bass. One day I asked, "Is finding a bass player that hard?" and the overwhelming answer was "Yes!" So I picked up a Fender P-Bass and started teaching myself. Within six months I was booking gigs and winning awards, and I haven't looked back!

What's a lesson you've learned along the way?

Feel for the areas you can add a little more of yourself to a song. Always be prepared going into a musical situation. Be early and be kind. Tune often.

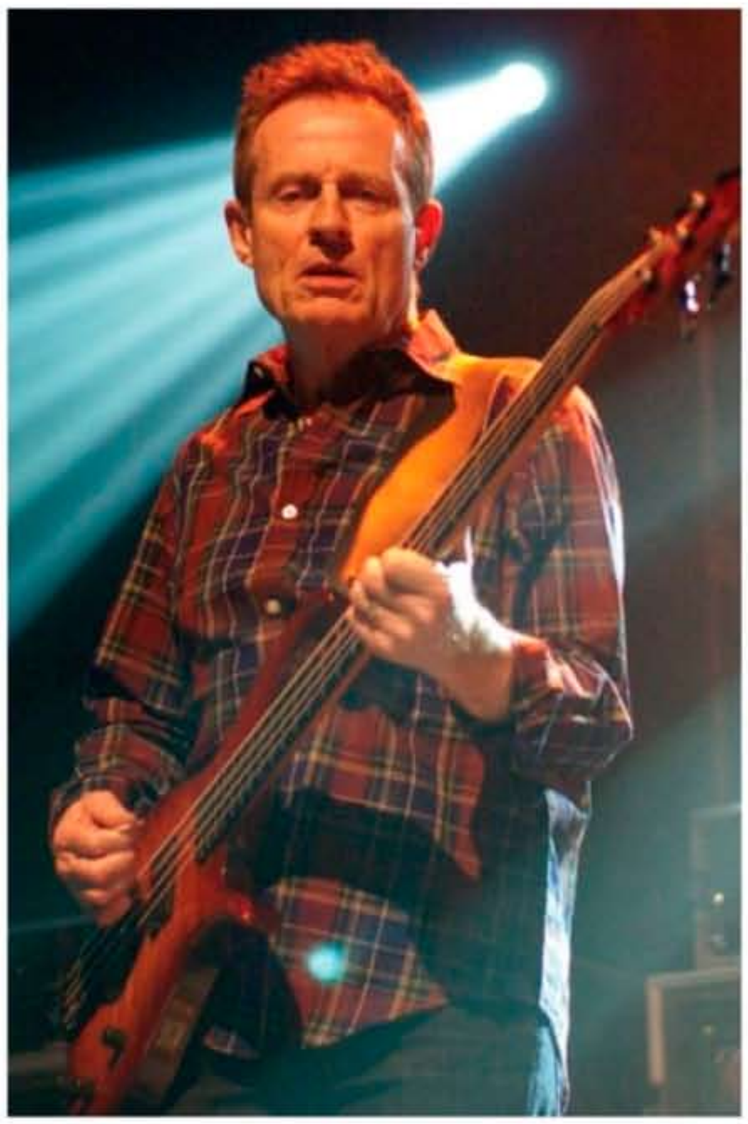
What are your musical goals?

To record/tour/play for a well-known artist. Put out a few of my own albums. Be well known enough in the music world that I will one day have my own bass clinic at BASS PLAYER LIVE!

To introduce yourself in The Real World, email your answers to all of these questions to bprealworld@gmail.com. Get selected for the column and D'Addario will send you a set of EXL170 bass strings and a T-shirt. All those who submit will receive D'Addario's FretBuzz newsletter.

TIMELINE

This Month In Bass History January



1st Latin jazz stalwart Andy Gonzalez born, **1951**.

3rd Led Zeppelin's John Paul Jones born, **1946**.

4th Phil Lynott of Thin Lizzy dies of heart failure and pneumonia after being in a coma for eight days following a drug overdose, **1986**.

5th Jazz composer and upright icon Charles Mingus dies, **1979**.

9th John Deacon's harmonies and bass line help push Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" to No. 1 on the U.K. singles chart, **1976**.

12th Sting, Stewart Copeland, and guitarist Henri Padovani rehearse for the first time as the Police, **1977**.

14th Composer, bandleader, and session musician Mark Egan born, **1951**.

15th Paul Simonon auditions for the Clash, **1976**. Elton John bassist Dee Murray dies, **1992**.

17th Jeff Berlin is born, **1953**. Led Zeppelin releases its self-titled debut album, **1969**.

19th Jazz bassist Israel Crosby born, **1919**. Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, Roger Waters' masterpiece, hits No. 1 on the U.S. album charts, **1980**.

22nd German bassist and composer Eberhard Weber born, **1940**. Stevie Wonder hits No. 1 on the U.S. singles chart with "I Wish," boosted by Nate Watts' slides and accents, **1977**.

25th Jazz bassist Wellman Braud is born, **1891**. Joy Division, with Peter Hook, makes its live debut in Manchester, England, **1978**.

26th Motown bass legend James Jamerson born, **1936**.

27th Norman Watt-Roy's busy bass line helps propel Ian Dury & the Blockheads' "Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick" to the top of the U.K. charts, **1979**.

29th Blues bass icon and songwriter Willie Dixon dies, **1992**.

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EXPO

Communionists!

Glenn Hughes hypes Black Country Communion guitarist Joe Bonamassa during their performance at the Fox Theater, Riverside, CA on March 17, 2010. The band's third album, *Afterglow*, is out now.

RICK GOULD

arshall

BASS NOTES

THE WANDERING, AMY LAVERE & SHANNON McNALLY

Amy LaVere

Slap-Happy Upright

BY JIMMY LESLIE | PHOTO BY KERRI KELTING

"I WAS BORN TO SLAP AN UPRIGHT BASS," SAYS AMY LAVERE. CATCH her onstage with the Wandering (including Luther Dickinson of North Mississippi Allstars/Black Crowes) or her duo with co-Wanderer Shannon McNally, and it's clear LaVere is not kidding. Others might be more schooled, but no player is more at home slapping an upright bass in perfect pocket to a country two-step than LaVere. The bass isn't just LaVere's instrument—it's her dance partner. She twirls it around and twirls her body around the bass in harmonious flow. When the upright lady unleashes her lovely voice, the dance is on and all bets are off.

INFO

LISTEN

Amy LaVere & Shannon McNally, *Chasing the Ghost Rehearsal Sessions* [Archer, 2012]; The Wandering, *Go On Now, You Can't Stay Here: Mississippi Folk Music Volume III* [Songs of the South, 2012]

EQUIP

Bass Early '70s ¾-size Engelhardt upright
Rig Fishman BP-100 pickup, Fishman Pro-EQ Platinum Preamp/EQ/DI, Gallien-Krueger MB Fusion head, two Gallien-Krueger Neo 212-II cabs
Strings Thomastik Spirocore S42 medium

CONNECT

Watch Amy LaVere & Shannon McNally at the 2012 Joshua Tree Roots Music Festival.

How did you get your slap bass wings?

I was living with a house full of musicians. I was the only girl. It was a lot like *Three's Company*, but there were five of us. A few of the occupants at the time were members of Those Legendary Shack Shakers. There was also a guy who never paid rent—we kept him around for his sense of humor—plus Jason Brown, who was the upright bass player for Hank Williams III, and me. One evening I picked up Jason's bass and started hopping around and slapping it in an effort to mock him and get a laugh. I play a little guitar, so I knew the notes well enough to play a two-beat in *E*. I was goofing off, and Jason's jaw was on the floor—"You're doing it!"

What would you recommend to an electric player who is considering jumping to upright and giving slap a go?

I'm not sure it's possible to teach just anyone how to do it. Your hands have to be very relaxed but have purpose, and the rest is "the force." I don't mean "force" in the sense of strength, I mean it in the *Star Wars* use of the word, or going "snake eyes" as they say in *Little Big Man*. Realize it's a dance for your hands. Probably the best way to start would be to pick out your favorite Johnny Cash record, drink a little straight bourbon until you are pretty loose, happy, and dancing around the room by yourself. It's important to not take yourself too seriously if you want to do this well. You simply cannot approach slap bass with any tension or stress involved.

All right, we're dancing. What's the next step?

Pick up the upright and dance with it for a while. Flip the record. Then play along. It's really primitive stuff. This way of playing upright is more akin to jungle drumming than playing a "song." You have to lose yourself in it and boogie with the pulse—get into it, man! Most important, whatever you do, do not *think* about playing slap bass when *playing* slap bass. **BP**

BP RECOMMENDS

JOHN DAVERSA
JUNK WAGON: THE BIG BAND ALBUM
[BFR Classics]

As their V.S.O.P. clinic at Bass Player LIVE! showed, the John Diversa Progressive Big Band—led by the talented trumpeter/composer/arranger—is a musical beast with 18 pieces that breathe as one. Among the high points are "Your Mother," which blends a retro New Orleans feel with keen abstract touches, and the meter-switching title track, which balances glorious themes and angry riffs before being capped by an expressive solo by **Jerry Watts**, whose 5-string can drive the band with the thunder of an 18-wheeler or the whisper of harmonics. —CHRIS JISI

JON LEIBMAN
FUNK BASS [Hal Leonard]

Twenty years after it first hit shelves, *Funk Bass* is still one of the best ways to learn how to put the fire under a funk band. In this second edition, the pictures of author **Jon Leibman** remain the same, but the added chord symbols, vastly improved CD, and expanded gear and discography appendices bring this must-have into the 21st century. Leibman's emphasis on grooving is more important than ever, and going through the exercises—written in both notation and tablature—will do wonders for your reading, your ear, and your practice habits. —E.E. BRADMAN

CIRCA SURVIVE
VIOLENT WAVES
[circasurvives.com]

On the fourth, self-produced album by these Philly rockers, bassist **Nick Beard** showcases his most gritty and thoughtful writing ever, playing countermelodies and using unpredictable phrasing throughout. In fact, his performances on songs like "Suitcase," "Sharp Practice" and "Bird Sounds" just may be his best album performances yet. —JON D'AURIA

JOHN BEASLEY
3 BRAVE SOULS
[BFM Jazz]

L.A. keyboard monster John Beasley, whose credits run from Miles Davis to ABC's *Duets*, teams with fellow feel freaks **Darryl Jones** and drummer Ndugu Chancler (plus some vocal and horn guests) for a true groove gem. Jones grabs the melody on the Stuff-ish 12/8 ballad, "Come and Gone," takes a pocketed solo amid the Miles murk of "Ayala," and deftly handles both roles on his own simmering tune "Ubiquitous." Coolest of all are Darryl's Sly Stone-pitched vocals and bouncing bass on "Stay," his inventive, uplifting nod to Sly's "If You Want Me to Stay." In short, style and substance in droves. —CHRIS JISI

BILL LASWELL
MEANS OF DELIVERANCE [Innerhythmic]

There's no hiding behind production trickery when you record an entire album on solo acoustic bass—specifically, a fretless Warwick Alien—but if you're **Bill Laswell**, what's to hide? Sure, he works an EBow into "Bagana/Sub Figura X" and builds looped swells of resonant feedback for "In Failing Light," but the ends justify the means. From the dark country lope of "Against the Upper House" to the Moroccan *guimbri*-like strains of "Epiphaneia," it's rare to hear such a brash innovator in so intimate a setting. —BILL MURPHY

DEFTONES
KOI NO YOKAN
[Warner Bros.]

It can't be easy to fill the shoes of a beloved bassist like **Chi Cheng**, who has been semi-conscious since a car wreck in late 2008. After two albums with Deftones, however, **Sergio Vega** is finally sounding like he's part of the family. *Koi No Yokan* rocks with more volume, complexity, and fury than 2010's *Diamond Eyes*, thanks to Vega's toothy attack ("Poltergeist"), punchy rhythmic control ("Leathers") and fluidity with Deftone's trademark psych-metal grooves, especially on the ever-morphing closer "What Happened to You?" —BILL MURPHY

KEN MICALLEF

(top) Michael Leonhart
(center) Jay Leonhart
(bottom) Freddie Washington

Glamour Profession

The Bassists Of Donald Fagen's *Sunken Condos*

BY CHRIS JISI

IT REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST EXCLUSIVE and longest-running clubs in the sideman realm: cutting bass tracks for Walter Becker and Donald Fagen—either in their collective form, Steely Dan, or on their equally sophisticated solo CDs. What bassist wouldn't want to join the likes of Chuck Rainey, Anthony Jackson, Marcus Miller, Will Lee, Abraham Laboriel, Tom Barney, "Ready" Freddie Washington, and Becker himself behind the velvet ropes? And what bass writer wouldn't want to join a telephone roundtable with the four bass players on Donald Fagen's latest CD, *Sunken Condos*, an energetic, feel-rich collection of wry fables with an emphasis on funk? The roundtable concept was the brainchild of album co-producer Michael Leonhart (most visibly Steely Dan's longtime trumpeter, but also a talented composer, arranger, and studio savant).

Leonhart, who played all the live drums on the CD under the pseudonym Earl Cooke Jr., also stood in on the phone panel for the disc's fifth bassist, Harlan Post—who is actually Donald Fagen's synth bass-playing alter ego (Fagen's bass "nom de musica" first appeared on his 2006 solo CD, *Morph the Cat*). The other four phone-bound thumpers were Dan-vet Freddie Washington in Los Angeles, currently on tour with the Dukes of September (Fagen, Michael McDonald, and Boz Scaggs); upright jazz bassist and solo artist Joe Martin (Jane Monheit, Joel Frahm), on

INFO

LISTEN

Donald Fagan, *Sunken Condos* [Reprise, 2012]

EQUIP

Joe Martin '60s German upright recorded with two Royer R-122 ribbon mics ("Slinky Thing")
Jay Leonhart 1920 Duvivier upright recorded with an RCA 44 ribbon mic above the bridge ("The New Breed")
Lincoln Schleifer Telstar Beatle Bass copy ("Memorabilia"), 2008 Fender Precision Bass with flatwounds ("Weather in My Head"), '71 Gibson Melody Maker ("Planet D'Rhonda")
Freddie Washington '72 Fender Precision Bass with flatwounds, recorded direct ("Out of the Ghetto")
Harlan Post Prophet 5, Arturia ARP 2600 and Jupiter 8 plug-ins, GarageBand acoustic bass, muted electric bass, and synth bass plug-ins ("The New Breed," "I'm Not the Same Without You," "Miss Marlene," "Good Stuff")

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Joe Martin

the road in Japan; and in New York City, veteran plucker Lincoln Schleifer, who worked in Fagen's New York Rock and Soul Revue in the '90s and more recently with Donald at the late Levon Helm's famed Midnight Ramble concerts in Woodstock; and Michael's dad, upright mainstay Jay Leonhart, who has released over a dozen solo discs while anchoring everyone from Liza Minelli, Mel Torme, and Gerry Mulligan to Carly Simon, James Taylor, and Paul Simon. We asked them all for insight into the making of *Sunken Condos*—a play on Debussy's "The Sunken Cathedral," but also a nod to the struggling economy and Fagen's advancing age (he's 64)—as well as what it's like to gain entrance into "the club."

Michael, how did you come to collaborate with Donald on *Sunken Condos*?

Michael Leonhart I've been working with Donald in Steely Dan for 15 years, and he knows I produce and play multiple instruments. I had a standing offer to help him put together any new material he had, and in March 2010 he asked me to come over and listen to what he had.

Donald's ... err, Harlan Post's keyboard bass is prevalent, appearing on four tracks, starting with the syncopated part on "I'm Not the Same Without You."

Donald initially demoed all the songs on synth bass, and nothing that followed had quite the same sound and feel as his original parts. Donald's fundamental priority is groove, so whatever locked in best, whether electric, acoustic, or synth bass, was the main consideration. For "I'm Not the Same," Donald had a syncopated R&B/disco concept against a four-on-the-floor kick. His synth bass had a warm sine wave-y vibe that we felt worked better then having the attack, definition, and string noise of a bass guitar.

How about the shuffle part of "Miss Marlene"?

For that I insisted on the original synth bass part, because electric bass would have sounded too derivative of a classic Steely Dan shuffle. The consistent tone gives the track a circular momentum, and it has the punch of a Stevie Wonder keyboard bass track, which lies well against the Rhodes and drums. I'm not a purist about having to have real bass on a song, and Donald only looks forward. He wants be in the here and now; we both don't want to sound retro.

Throughout the CD, Donald can be heard creating muted notes, varying note durations, and playing scoops, slurs, pull-offs, and even 10ths.

He really has a feel for bass and how to humanize it with his touch, his pitch wheel, and other skills. Interestingly, Lincoln did a great take on "Good Stuff," but it felt almost too real and not fantastical enough for the lyric. Plus, the hyper drums needed a murky, more static bass.

Freddie Washington Donald's keen sensibility for bass also comes from being a great arranger. He knows how to write

TORY WILLIAMS

in the parameters of the instrument.

Joe Martin Bass is always a big part of his songs. His parts have this great melodic and intervallic movement, but they also function as solid, supportive bass lines.

This is the first time I can recall Donald using acoustic bass on his records.

Michael Leonhard Right. The only other time was when Steely Dan hired Ray Brown for "Razor Boy" on *Countdown to Ecstacy* [MCA, 1973]. Donald demoed the first song we recorded, "Slinky Thing," with an upright bass sound and figured we'd have to replace it with electric bass. The challenge of finding an upright bassist who could physically do two hours of takes without their pitch, vibrato, and time wavering, plus play with an authentic R&B feel and not get frustrated mentally—because Donald can be intimidating without knowing it—seemed insurmountable. But then I thought of Joe; I'd played with him in jazz clubs for years and had done some soul and boogaloo projects with him. He has a certain calm and confidence, and he always retained his great sound and feel through the last set each night. Sure enough, he kept it right in the pocket take after take. Donald just laughed in amazement.

Joe, how did you approach the funky part in "Slinky Thing"? Did you draw from the electric bass or keyboard bass stylistically?

Joe Martin Fortunately, I got to have an informal jam with Donald and Michael first, just playing through some Monk tunes and standards. From there, they gave me a scratch track, a chart with the form, and an idea for the bass line. They wanted the upright sound but also a bit of the sensibility of how an electric bassist might approach it. I played electric before I got to upright, so conceptually I can get that kind of attack on the acoustic, and that's what I kept in mind. We did some talking and tweaking while recording until we got to what they were looking for.

Lincoln, both "Memorabilia" and "Weather in My Head" sound like written bass lines, but there's a definite sense of interpretation, especially around the edges. How much freedom were you given?

Lincoln Schleifer Probably more than I used on "Memorablilia." I read Donald's part fairly literally, with maybe a few

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interjections here or there. With Donald it's always about feel, pitch, note duration, intensity—it's all in the details and for the right musical reasons. He'll also give directions during a performance, like, "Lay back a little." On "Weather," I timidly suggested opening the part up in the solo sections, especially on the outro. Donald and Michael were very open to hearing my idea and they liked it and kept it. With a blues-type part like that, I just played like I would on a live gig, without overthinking it.

Your other track, "Planet D'Rhonda," has an interesting bass sound and reminds me of the "Glamour Profession" bass part, with rests on some of the downbeats.

That's Michael's '71 Gibson Melody Maker, which has a single pickup by the neck. For my sessions, Michael asked me to bring the most lo-fi, warm, funky basses I had, and he brought a few. The Gibson intrigued me, so I put good flatwounds on it and we tried it. It was like having an 808 kick [drum sound]! There was zero high end and a real dub sound; later, when I heard the CD, it actually had more definition than I remembered. The bass line was another of Donald's great parts, and I read it as written.

AMY KERWIN

Lincoln Schleifer

Jay, you play an interesting role on "The New Breed."

Jay Leonhart Yes, and when Michael told me about it and gave me the track, with Harlan Post's synth bass, I tried to contact Harlan but he never called me back [*laughs*]. Essentially, we thought of my role as being a comment piece, flying in and out with fills that answered the vocal—like one of the Steely Dan guitarists, but an octave lower. I sat at home and played to the track, getting a sense of the harmonies and trying out ideas. I was also asked to play some slides, *à la* my mentor, Ray Brown, so that was a nice connection. Oh, and I did play on another song first, a beautiful ballad, for which Donald came out of the control room and gave me all kinds of subtle, terrific suggestions, but then he decided to leave that song off the CD.

Michael Leonhart The synth bass part on "Breed" took the longest to perfect and find the pocket for. Then when the track was almost done, Donald felt something was missing. He referenced Quincy Jones's score for *In Cold Blood*, singing the Ray Brown bass slides, and he said, "Your dad would be great on this." What I really like is how my dad approached the song as basically a blues, like "Peg." Freddie knows this from all our years of touring; a lot of musicians, when they first get on the Steely Dan gig, try to play over all the extensions that exist in the harmonies, but what Donald and Walter ask is that you commit to just playing the blues against their chord changes.

Freddie, let's talk about your part on "Out of the Ghetto." Had you heard the original Isaac Hayes track, which has both Willie Weeks and a synth bass part?

Freddie Washington Donald has a knack for finding obscure covers, and I have to say, this one got past me. But when I heard it, I understood the concept right away. Michael had the chart, and I read it down while finding the pocket. I don't really listen to myself when I play; I listen to everything that's going on around me. In this case there was Michael's Minimoog bass part and how I was going to play off it; I try to create a dance based on where I play and where I don't. I did change the line a little at the end of the phrase, where it went up. I said to Donald, "How about if I keep this part going down?" And he said, "Oh yeah, that's cool."

Michael Leonhart We wanted Freddie on more tracks, but logistically all we had was one day. We saved "Ghetto" for him, which Donald wanted to recast as an Ashkenazi Jewish ghetto tune using some klezmer ingredients. Freddie is such a gentleman and a team player, but I could tell the Minimoog was boxing him in, so by consensus we took it out while he recorded—and then the magic really happened, with Freddie bringing his unique low-end element to the track.

Let's close by asking you each to pick a favorite Steely Dan/Donald Fagen song and bass line, and to express your feelings now that you're "in the club."

Joe Martin I'd pick the *Aja* album for songs, and "Josie" for favorite bass line. I grew up in the Midwest, and hearing Steely Dan on the radio was part of the soundtrack of my life. So moving to New York City and eventually playing on Donald's record is an unbelievable honor.

Lincoln Schleifer Like Joe, I'd go with *Aja* the album and the song; it's remarkably transportive. Bass-wise, I also love "Glamour Profession" and "I.G.Y." My long association with Donald and finally being able to record some of his songs has been a real highpoint of my career.

Freddie Washington And I'll go with *Aja* as a song and album, too, and "Peg" as my favorite bass line; I really enjoy playing that on tour. I had always wanted to work with Steely Dan, and when the opportunity came I was like, "My heroes are calling me!" It has been a dream come true ever since.

Jay Leonhart I would pick "Kid Charlemagne" as my favorite song and bass line. As an upright bassist, I learned how to play electric bass from listening to Steely Dan records; they were my post-graduate degree. Back then, when my kids were young, they used to ask me if I played for Steely Dan. Now I'm thrilled at last to be a part of the legacy. **BP**

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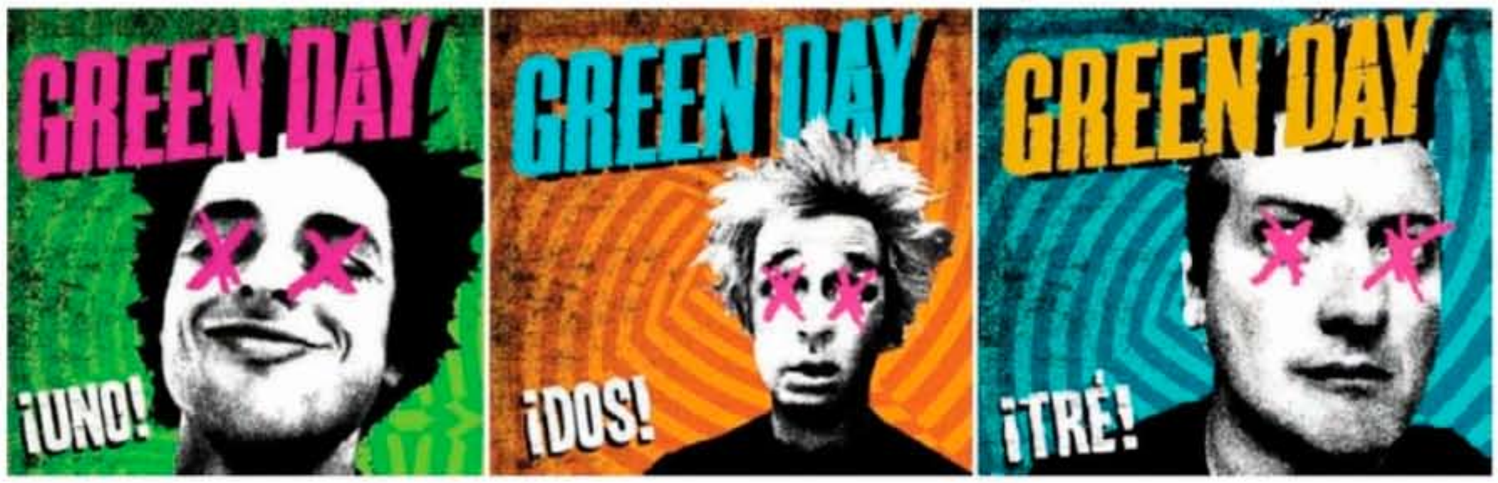
HOLY TRINITY!

MIKE DIRNT & GREEN DAY COME AROUND WITH *¡UNO!, ¡DOS! & ¡TRÉ!*

BY E.E. BRADMAN

SOME BANDS ARE DESTINED to release a single great album in their career; others, more than one. But few bands can top themselves as successfully as Green Day has in the last eight years. *American Idiot*, the 2004 punk-rock concept album that became a hit Broadway musical, sent Green Day's career into overdrive and took its power-punk message of alienation to the mainstream. Five years later,

PHOTOSHOT/RETNA



21st Century Breakdown was the impossible follow-up: smart, catchy, and successful. So how do you relax and savor success after you've hit two home runs? You hit three more, of course.

At an age when many punk-rockers are ready to begin slowing down, Green Day is releasing three albums that prove the band still has plenty of fire. The snotty brats who ruled the '90s with snarling tracks like "Longview" and then went Broadway and political are cock-walking into their 40s full of piss and vinegar, perhaps none more so than Mike Dirnt.

Over the course of eight albums—*39/Smooth*, *Kerplunk*, *Dookie*, *Insomniac*, *Nimrod*, *Warning*, *American Idiot*, and *21st Century Breakdown*—Dirnt has emulated the great punk and rock bassists of the '70s while continually experimenting with his tone, approach, and gear. The defining characteristic of Mike's work just might be his melodicism: He can downstroke 16th-notes with the best of 'em, but his favorite bass lines are their own catchy little hooks, a fact that's gloriously evident on Green Day's trio of new albums, *¡Uno!*, *¡Dos!*, and *¡Tré!*.

As he's been doing on the band's last couple albums, Dirnt spends plenty of time on *¡Uno!* serving the song, sticking out just enough to remind us he's there. But on songs like "Nuclear Family," he's fast and loose, putting cool fills and riffs in just the right places. His tone is beefy yet blended on "Stay the Night," and he takes it to the dance floor on "Kill the DJ." *¡Dos!* is even more jam packed: "Nightlife" finds him loud and proud over a hip-hop beat, "Lazy Bones" is a great showcase for his new, buff tone, and "Drama Queen" gives Dirnt a chance to pay tribute to Sir Paul McCartney—on a Höfner, no less. *¡Tré!* is an epic and anthemic New Years present to Green Day's fans, and on tracks like "Dirty Rotten Scoundrel" and "Stray Heart," Dirnt throws down like a champ.

A quarter-century into his career, nothing is as important to Dirnt as his partnership with singer/

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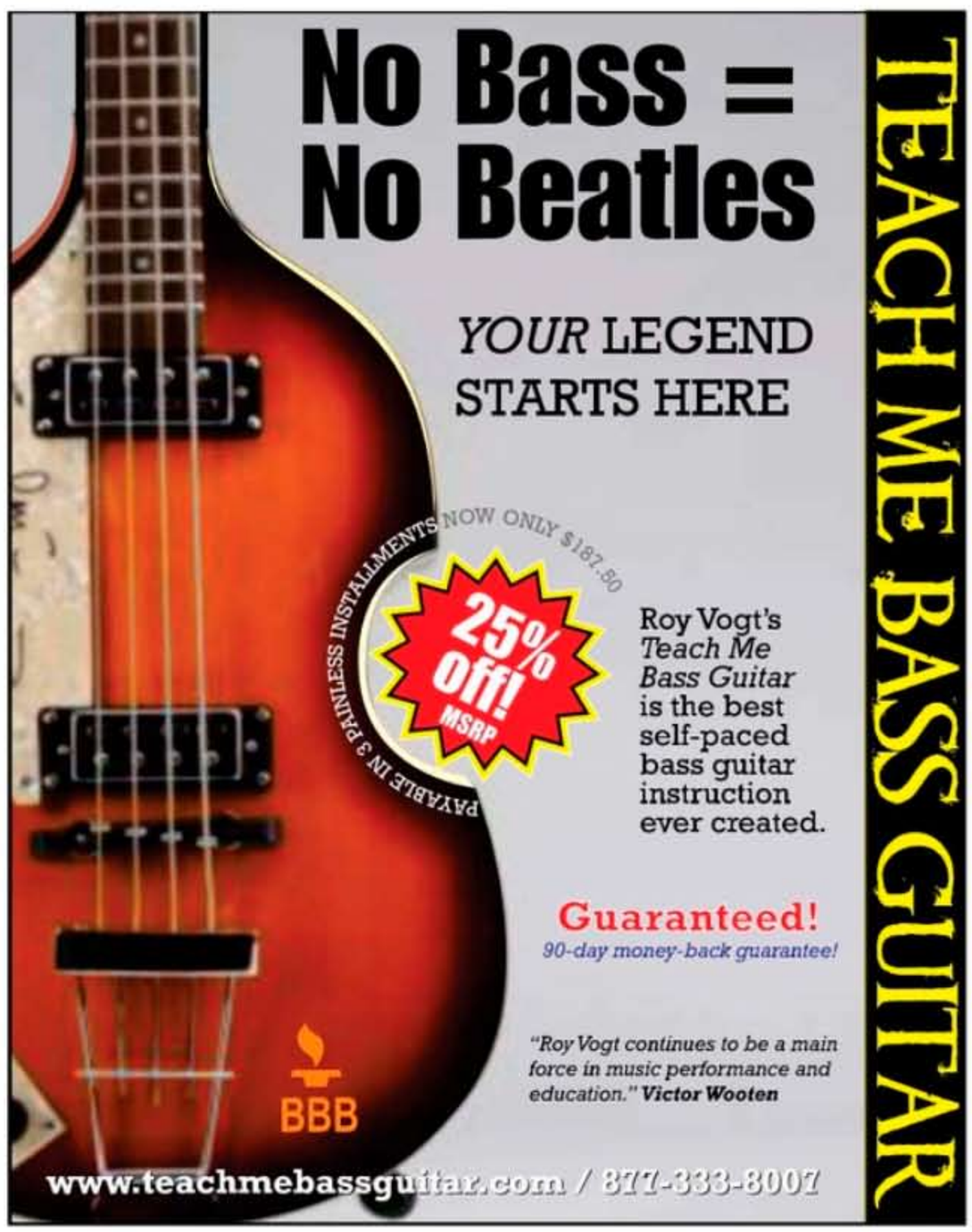
guitarist Billy Joe Armstrong and drummer Tré Cool. "I can't see myself ever not doing Green Day," he says. "There are side projects I have fun with, and I like doing interesting things, but Green Day will always be my world and my *pièce de résistance*."

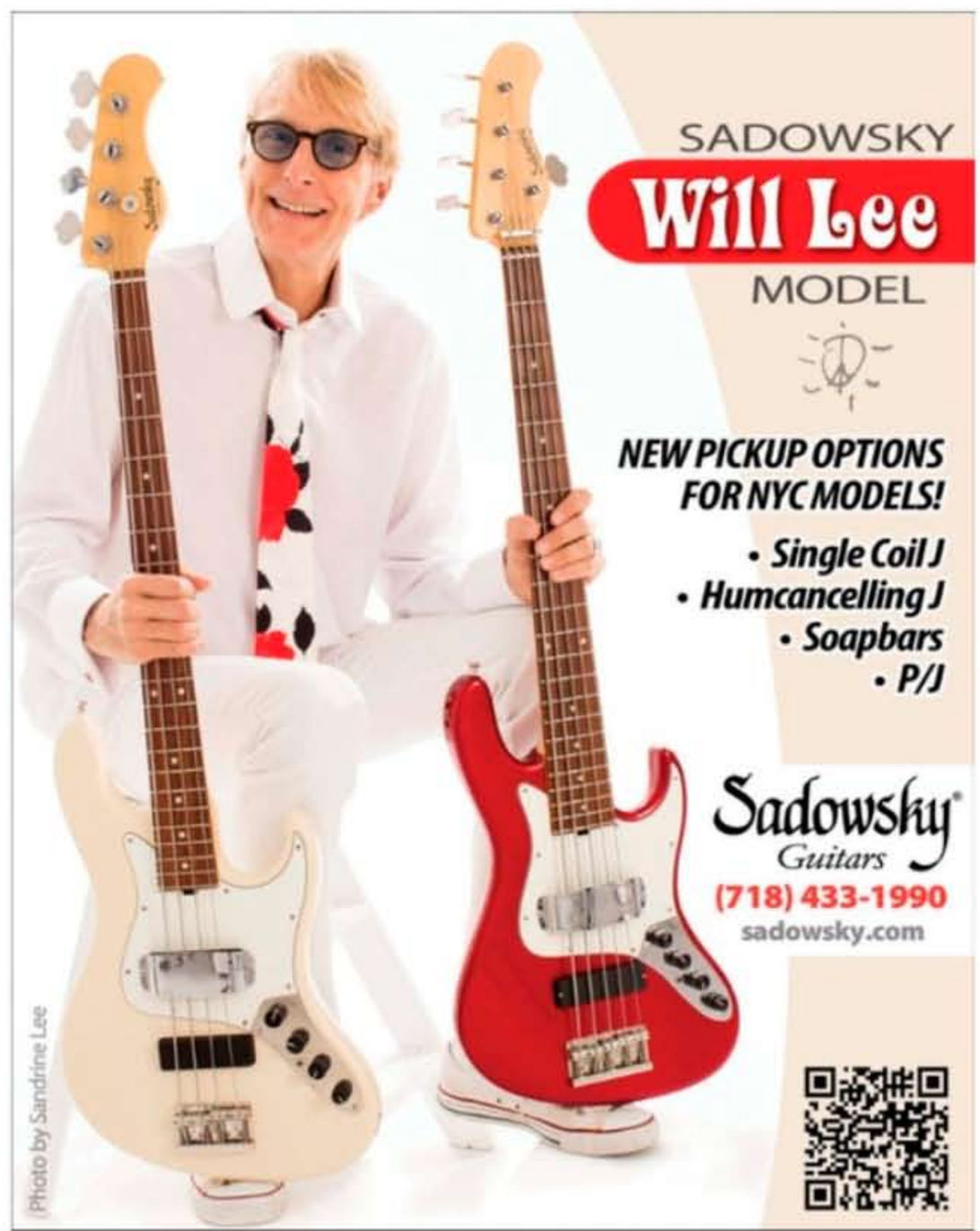
How did you begin writing for these new albums?

During our last tour, on our days off, we rented little studios all over Europe and demoed stuff. After we had gotten home and taken a couple months off, we started band practices; we got into a groove, playing five days a week in Oakland and just feeding off each other. We had [additional guitarist] Jason White jamming with us the whole time. I played though my Fender Super Bassman and one of my custom Mesa Boogie 6x10 cabs; the guitarists were using smaller amps, and Tré used a smaller kit so we could hear and play off each other.

How often do you write songs for Green Day?

I'm always writing songs; I could write melodic riffs and tracks all day long. Obviously, Billy is the main songwriter in this band, but there are lots of great collaborations all over our records. I was talking to





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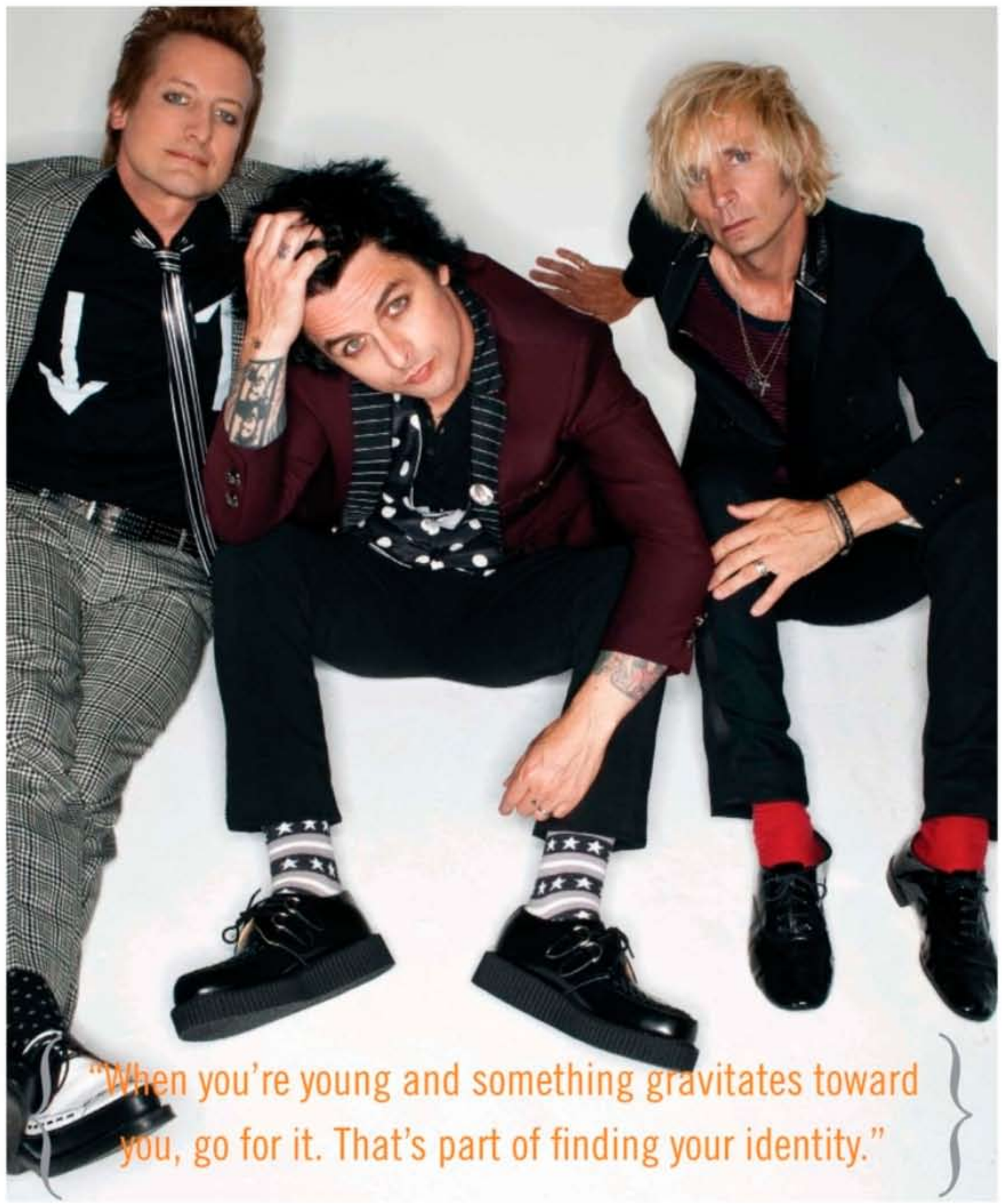

"When you're young and something gravitates toward you, go for it. That's part of finding your identity."

my daughter Stella on the phone one day and playing bass at the same time, and I wrote something, recorded it on my iPhone, and brought it up to Billy's house that night. It ended up being the main chord structure for a new song, "Missing You," and the breakdown to the song.

How does the band write songs together?

I know how to bookend a song, tear it apart, and put it back together a million ways from Sunday, and Billy does, too. We'll bring in bits and pieces or the middle of a song and then put it together in rehearsal. For this album, we kept writing, recording, and trying out songs at shows in Southern California, New York, and Austin.

Was the process different with *Breakdown*?

When we came back from the American Idiot tour and found ourselves looking at a blank piece of paper, it was terrifying. *21st Century Breakdown* was the hardest record we ever wrote. No band in the world wanted to follow *American Idiot*, and only one band could. It was our job to either phone it in or to really go for it, and it's just not in our DNA to mail in a record. This time, we had a lot of fun, and we did things in a really organic, blue-collar, super-fun way.

These albums sound relaxed, too.

I purposely kept my playing loose, because the studio can take that from you. Even if something wasn't perfect, if it had a character, I'd just leave it. When you're making your way through 37 different

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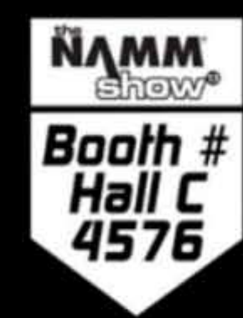

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tracks, you just gotta let some serendipity happen.

How did you decide to put out three albums?

Even when we whittled down our list of 70 songs to about 28, we knew we still had some good songs in the pipeline that we just hadn't worked out yet. Making one super-long record sounded stupid, and everyone's done double records. Billy came up with the idea of doing a trilogy, and I loved it. Plus, by the time we got down to 20 songs, we were really starting to write in three directions. The first one was full of grab-life-by-the-horns power-pop songs, with classic Green Day flair. The next record was like more like a party that's the greatest time you've ever had, but the worst thing you've ever done to yourself.

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With their slab ash bodies, 1955-era arm contours, and classic 1951-shape pickguards, Mike Dirnt's Fender and Squier signature basses are inspired by the original '51 Precision Bass, as well as classic '50s and '60s colors. The Fender Dirnt bass has a rosewood fingerboard, Custom Vintage 1959 P-Bass pickup, Leo Quan Badass Bass II bridge, vintage-style '70s Fender stamped open-gear tuning keys, and a thick, C-shaped maple neck modeled after Mike's '69 P-Bass. His signature-model Squier P-Bass, meanwhile, features an agathis body, a standard P-Bass pickup, standard 4-saddle chrome bridge, and a thick, C-shape maple neck with a rosewood fretboard. All of Dirnt's basses, as well as his '69 P-Bass ("Stella") and '71 P-Bass ("the Weapon"), are strung with Fender Super 7250 roundwounds gauged .045–.105. His collection also includes a Höfner, a black 1982 Gibson Victory bass, a '65 candy-apple red Jazz Bass, and an Olympic white '62 P-Bass that "sounds like a Steinway."

Dirnt's journey with Fender amps began around 2003 with Bassman Pro and TB-1200 heads and 810 8x10 Pro cabs. In 2010, he became involved in helping Fender design a new bass head; artist relations manager Billy Siegle says they talked about "impactful bass, transparent high end, warm midrange, and overall, a classic yet refined tone." The result of that collaboration is the Super Bassman. "I'm very proud of the tone we came up with," Dirnt says. "Plus, these amps look bitchin' and sound amazing." On tour and in the studio, Dirnt uses Super Bassman heads and 610 Neo 6x10 cabs.

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FOREWORD BY BOOTSY COLLINS
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And then the third record was more reflective; the songs were epic, with a bit more of *American Idiot*'s grandeur. It was my idea to put one of our faces on each album, kind of a lighthearted take on what Kiss did when they released their four solo albums on the same day back in the '70s.

American Idiot and *21st Century Breakdown* both contained some fiery political commentary, but the new albums don't really go there. We've never wanted to pigeonhole ourselves or write from only one position; we don't want to be pundits or spokespeople. There was a time when we felt like we were fed up with shit, and we're in a transition period in this country. Our band is kind of in a transition period, too, but things are moving well. Songs like "Kill the DJ" do address fighting the static, though—the bullshit that surrounds us and invades our minds. The other major political song is obviously "99 Revolutions," which wrote itself pretty quickly around the Occupy movement.

There are several distinct eras of Dirnt tone. What was your setup on *Kerplunk*?

My secret weapons were Yamaha G100 guitar heads from the late '70s and early '80s, which I used to play through my custom Mesa Boogie 6x10 cabinet. That's what started my love of 6x10 cabinets. I used that Yamaha and 6x10 on every record except this one, and occasionally, I've used an Ampeg, too.

On *Insomniac*, I played my Gibson G3; you can really hear it on *Kerplunk* and *Insomniac*. It's distinctive, like on the intro to "No One Knows." On *Nimrod*, that was mostly my '69 P-Bass and a '52 Precision, I think.

You seem to favor passive basses.

Some guys have gotten great active sounds, but that's just never been my world. Actually, on *Dookie*, I played an active P-Bass that I rented from SIR, because my basses were broken and thrashed from touring. That bass had P/J pickups, but the way I had it set, it might as well have just been a P-Bass. It went through an Éclair Engineering Evil Twin tube DI, and then my 6x10, and an Ampeg SVT. I had the Ampeg for the low end and the extra sub-lows, and then the 6x10 for that classic punch.

Between the transition from there to *Warning*, I started working with Mesa Boogie, and that's when I ended up using two 6x10s sitting on top of an 1x18. I was also using a Sunn head, and I had Mesa make me a 4x10 cabinet that I could use for the high end, to get that click, like tic-tac bass.

Sounds like quite a setup.

It was. After *Warning*, I just wanted to go "less is more." Honestly, I probably way over-thought my bass tone back then, but I learned so much throughout that process. When you're young and something gravitates toward you, go for it, because that's part of finding your identity; it's your own journey. Whatever floats your boat, chase it down, because that's gonna become part of your style. There's some kid in his garage right now, figuring it out his own way, and he's just fuckin' it up—he doesn't even realize it [*laughs*]. But that's how the next rad dude is created.

Between *Warning* and *American Idiot*, I began working with Fender on my signature bass. I'm super proud of the tone I have right now because I worked closely with Fender's R&D department on the new Super Bassman line. I pushed for the amp to have a killer DI [output]. Manufacturers don't put enough emphasis on how good a DI in the back of an amp needs to be. That's your signal, and if you don't have a good DI, you're gonna lean on the microphone, which has all that stage noise going through it. The other thing I wanted was great distortion. I've used a series of pedals over the years, and every one of them cut my signal. I wanted to have the clean channel be crystal clear and unbelievable, and I wanted the overdrive channel to have exactly the same tone, but with bitchin' distortion; I did not want to lose my low end. And Fender nailed it. The overdrive on the Super Bassman is so cool that lots of people, like Brandon [Campbell] from Neon Trees, just leave it on all the time.

What are your main basses these days?

My signature bass is a big part of the sound of the new record—it's between that and my '71 P-Bass with a maple neck that I call "the Weapon." They're based on my '69; that's Stella, named after my daughter. And I play a Höfner on one song, "Drama Queen," which has really fat bass.

I actually made Paul McCartney a bitchin' bass years ago. I had Fender put an *f*-hole and classic binding on one of my tobacco-burst signature basses, and it had a pickup switch that went between a Höfner sound and my sound. I made one left-handed and one right-handed, and I sent him the other one. He was really stoked. I wrote him a letter with it that said, "On behalf of Green Day and all the other bands you've influenced, thanks."

How is it to play with Tré after all these years?

When Tré first started playing with me and Billy, on *Kerplunk!*, he was a sick drummer, and I had to get better, quick, to keep up with him. By the time we started nailing it with songs like "Welcome to Paradise" and "Eighty," Tré and I got a thing going, and now it's to the point where I'll play something that forces him to do something or accent it, or he'll play something that forces me to accent it. I've learned

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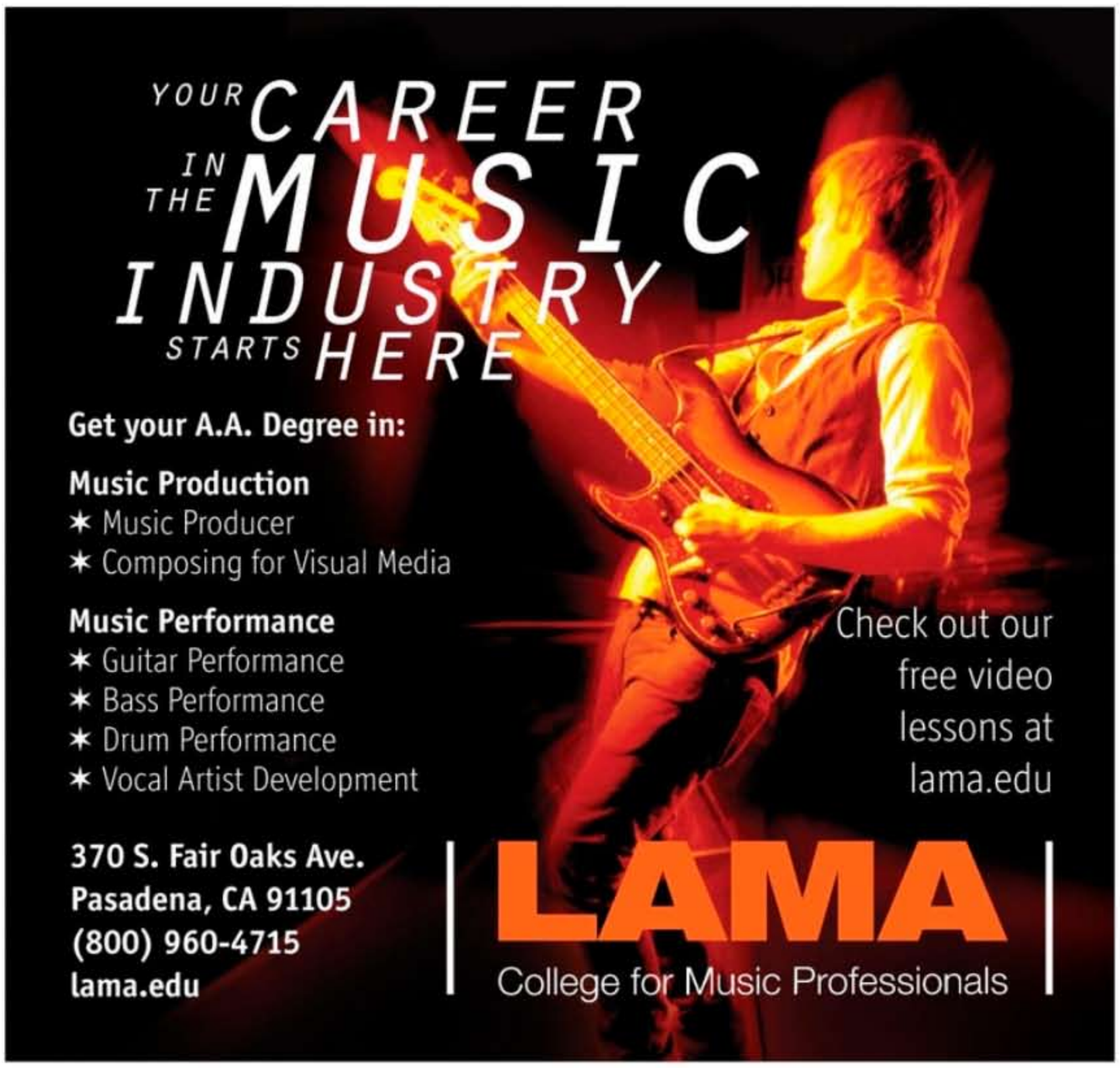

how to play drums so I could tell him what beats I want him to play.

But Tré hasn't picked up bass, has he?

Actually, Tré has played bass on a song, and I played drums. He played my candy-apple red '65 Jazz Bass, which I've never played on a song. It's an unreleased B-side, but it'll come out one day. And we switch instruments pretty often at band practice. I'll go jump on drums, or I'll jump on guitar, and Billy gets on bass, too.

Who was an early bass hero to you?

Cliff Burton. I met him when I was in fifth grade. He was walking through San Pablo, carrying a boom box and listening to metal, wearing his jeans, and I was with my cousin, who knew him. I didn't even know who Metallica was. And then I go to [concert series] Day on the Green with a buddy, and Metallica comes out, and I'm like, Holy shit! I met that guy!

Let's face it—he was a ridiculous bass player. Honestly, there are only two guys of that caliber: There's him, and there's Entwistle. You can put other guys in there, too, but as far as the aggression ... and if you ever looked up their bass solos, you'd see the similarity. They were both super fast and distorted.

Did you practice hard so you could play fast lines?

I'd probably be a lot better if I had actually studied more when I was a kid. You wouldn't have caught me in my room practicing scales—I was too busy trying to figure out other things [*laughs*]. I've worked for everything I play. Like on "Panic Song," from *Insomniac*, where I do that fast line for a minute and 57 seconds before the song really kicks in—I couldn't do that before then. I earned that from playing it on tour.

Those bass breaks on "Dirty Rotten Scoundrel" are pretty tasty.

That's probably the fastest stuff I've ever played on record. I didn't think I could do it, but the other guys were pushing me. I was like, "Nah, it's too noodly," and they were like, "Just fucking go there!" You've got to let your fingers fly sometimes [*laughs*]. And there are the occasional times when I have to be really creative about a part. I soul-searched to find just the right part for the beginning of "Basket Case," for example.

If not "the fastest," what title do you aspire to?

I want to be the catchiest. If we're all out there writing our parts, I want to be the guy everyone ends up playing along with, because I wrote the hook. That's what my angle has always been. I never claimed to be the best—I just want to be the catchiest. It's never been anything more than that. **BP**

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bassplayer LIVE!

RUMBLE ON TH

BASS PLAYER LIVE! RETURNS TO LOS ANGELES FOR ANOTHER HISTORIC WEEKEND OF CLINICS, CONCERTS, AND EXHIBITS.

BY CHRIS JISI & BRIAN FOX
PHOTOS BY ALEX SOLCA

IT BEGAN THE WAY ANY GREAT concert should, fashionably delayed, with a long line of eager attendees snaking around the circumference of the Key Club on Sunset Blvd; it ran the gamut from tears to cheers, with some surprises tossed in; and by the end it ranked as perhaps the most memorable of the five BASS PLAYER LIVE! concerts held thus far in Los Angeles. The annual BASS PLAYER LIVE! All-Star concert on October 20 launched with the presentation of Aston "Family Man" Barrett's Lifetime Achievement Award by fellow Jamaican bassist Phil Chen and BP Editor Brian Fox. Barrett noted, "This is the first award I have ever received in America, and it's such a great honor because it means the message of reggae music from Jamaica is reaching all the people of the world." Chen, serving as musical director on guitar, then led vocalist/guitarist Eric Walsh, drummer Oliver

E SUNSET STRIP

Charles, and Barrett through a mesmerizing run of five Bob Marley classics chosen for their super-sub-hook Barrett bass lines, including "I Shot the Sheriff," "Stir It Up," and "Could You Be Loved."

Rock legend and Yes founder Chris Squire next received his Lifetime Achievement Award from a group that included bassist Stu Hamm and Brian Fox. In his acceptance speech, a grateful Squire acknowledged his influence, John Entwistle, offering to lead the way in soon honoring the late Who bassist with a posthumous Lifetime award. Chris then guided his ultra-tight sextet (vocalist Jon Davison, guitarist Johnny Bruhns, keyboardists Matt Brown and Claudio Pesavento, and special guest, Foo Fighters' drummer Taylor Hawkins, who really turned heads with his powerful prog-rock stroke) through two songs from his 1975 cult classic solo side, *Fish out of Water*, as well as Yes smash hits "I See All Good People," "Owner of a Lonely Heart," and most rousingly, "Roundabout." Meanwhile, the green room beneath the stage again became the prime location for once-in-a-lifetime gatherings of top bassists and unexpected vistors. This year, the elite list included bassist Henrik Linder and his Dirty Loops band mates, on a break from preparing for their November Asian tour with David Foster.

The final and perhaps most moving segment was centered on a Posthumous Lifetime Achievement Award honoring the late great Jaco Pastorius. Metallica bassist Robert Trujillo, whose purchase of the litigated Bass of Doom and funding of the upcoming Jaco documentary brought a great

Top (L–R): Bakithi Kumalo, Julius Pastorius, Verdine White, Hadrian Feraud, John Ferraro, Steve Bailey, Brian Bromberg, and Robert Trujillo jam on "The Chicken" in a tribute to Jaco Pastorius.

Far left: Johnny, Julius, and Mary Pastorius accept a Lifetime Achievement Award on behalf of their father, Jaco Pastorius.

Left: "Fams" feelin' the love.

Right: Foo Fighters drummer Taylor Hawkins hops up from his drum throne to give props to Chris Squire.

sense of relief and peace of mind to the Pastorius family, took the stage with Jaco's son, Johnny Pastorius, to introduce a specially prepared 7-minute preview clip of *Jaco* [release date still unknown]. With emotions running high from the potent preview, Steve Bailey, Lee Sklar, Phil Chen, and Verdine White each offered some reverent words. Brian Fox then presented the award to Johnny, Mary, and Julius Pastorius. That provided a perfect segue to the annual all-star jam, with Julius jumping behind the drums, Trujillo strapping on the Bass of Doom (having earlier allowed guest bassists in the green room to try out the holy grail of groove machines), and Steve Bailey assuming his jam musical director role and counting off "The Chicken," in tribute to

Jaco. Steve, Robert, White, Brian Bromberg, Hadrien Feraud, Bakithi Kumalo, Bunny Brunel, and Damian Erskine each paid homage via fingers and from the heart.

The second and final jam tune, "Going Down," was a nod to the numerous bassists lost in 2012, in particular, two '60s session giants: Duck Dunn (who played on the Freddie King original) and Bob Babbitt. Bailey, with John Ferraro manning the drums, welcomed a broad range of basso talent, including Chen, "Ready" Freddie Washington, Gary Grainger, Quintin Berry, Igor Saavedra, and Bernhard Lackner. A post-concert party at the famed Rainbow Bar & Grill next door with the Squire and Pastorius entourages seemed fitting, given the rich rock bass history of the club, noted for regulars like Squire, Entwistle, Bruce, Jones, and Lemmy. At 3 AM, all that was left for the bleary-eyed remaining was to wonder what next year's concert would bring. **BP**

Top left: Robert Trujillo and the Pastorius family brought Jaco's famed "Bass of Doom" for attendees to check out.

Top: Eric Walsh, Phil Chen, and Aston "Family Man" Barrett blaze through a set of Bob Marley tunes.

Left: Robert Trujillo digs into the Bass of Doom.

Lower left: Phil Chen and BP Editor Brian Fox present a Lifetime Achievement Award to Aston "Family Man" Barrett.

Lower right: Julius Pastorius, Hadrian Feraud, and Steve Bailey trade looks and licks.

INFO

CONNECT

We'll be covering BPL!'s amazing lineup of clinics in the coming months. In the meantime, dig into hours of video from the biggest and best bass hang of the year. bassplayer.com/january2013

THE EXHIBITORS

Sukop's double-cutaway Classic bass (left) is aptly-named, but singlecut basses are perhaps the hippest bit of builder Steve Sukop's trip. sukop.com

Brian Bromberg's Bass on the Broadband broadcast live from its spot on the exhibit floor. bassonthebroadband.com

Alleva-Coppolo stacked its tabletop with a trippy paisley-finish J-style 5-string, and showed southpaws some love with a natural-finish lefty 5-string. allevacoppolo.com

Flip out! Attendees and artists alike checked out Ampeg's PF series heads and cabs alongside its Heritage series B-15. ampeg.com

Tech 21's new VT Bass 1969 head and Bass Boost pedals combined to form one of the show's more righteous rigs. tech21nyc.com

ArtistWorks demo'd its new Bass Campus, which features instructors Nathan East and John Patitucci. artistworksbass.com

Yamaha's venerable BB and RXB series of basses are old-school cool; its re-vamped Silent Bass is one of its most exciting offerings. usa.yamaha.com

Blast Cult doghouses were in the house—along with the company's new Thirty 2 32"-scale electric basses. blastcult.com

Like a moth to.... Flame-top Spector NS-2 and Coda basses were among the most fetching basses at BPL. spectorbass.com

Bass Strings Online showed off some of its enviable inventory. bassstringsonline.com

Benavente brought six beautiful basses for us all to drool over. benaventeguitars.com

The folks at Diffusion Audio demo'd their killer Sandberg basses through the powerful Two Notes Audio Engineering Torpedo C.A.B. speaker simulator. diffusion-audio.com

Berklee College of Music handed out literature about its various courses of study while Bass Department chair Steve Bailey hopped from clinic to clinic. berklee.edu

The Carvin booth in a rare moment of calm; it would later host a heavy jam on Patrice Rushen's "Forget Me Nots" with Freddie Washington and Sekou Bunch. carvin.com

Rotosound showed the strings that make them the choice of bass gods like Chris Squire and Steve Harris. rotosound.com

Pretty in Pink: DR Strings Neons always brighten the vibe. drstrings.com

In addition to its innovative TonePrint pedals, TC Electronic displayed its new flyweight BH250 head. tcelectronic.com

Aguilar brought a wide range of amps, cabs, and pedals, including its Tone Hammer 500, Tone Hammer 350, and DB 751 heads. aguilaramp.com

Dean Markley showed off the next generation of cryogenics with its new Helix bass strings. deanmarkley.com

Elixir Strings showed off its newly re-engineered coated bass strings. elixirstrings.com

Speaker tweakers of all shapes and sizes dug on Schroeder's array of cabinets. schroedercabinets.com

Seymour Duncan was giving away Steve Harris and Jaco Pastorius model pickups from its Custom Shop. seymourduncan.com

Darryl Anders (right) and the Dunlop crew displayed their strings and their award-winning line of MXR Bass Innovations pedals. jimdunlop.com

bassplayer LIVE!

Fodera brought its entire line of Standard basses, and announced the latest addition to the series, the Monarch 4 Standard. fodera.com

An array of Epifani rigs pumped out non-stop jams from the likes of Andrew Gouche and Robert "Bubby" Lewis. epifani.com

A limited editon Silverburst Jack Casady model was one of several sweet Epiphone axes on display. epiphone.com

A host of heavy hitters hung out at the Hartke booth, including (L–R) Phil Buckman, David Ellefson, Stuart Hamm, Frank Bello, Joe Vera, and Pancho Tomaselli. hartke.com

Leland Sklar was just one of hundreds of brother pluckers to check out Kala's various U-Basses. kalabrand.com

From Artcore semi-hollows to Grooveline solidbodies, Ibanez had all its basses covered. ibanez.com

Hadrien Feraud and "Bubby" Lewis were just a few of the dudes to throw down at the Michael Tobias Design booth. mtd.com

Paul Reed Smith Guitars was in the house with a pair of gorgeous Gary Grangier signature basses. prsguitars.com

The Los Angeles Music Academy table lies in wait while Bass Department Chair Jerry Watts blows through tunes in his clinic with the John Daversa Big Band. lama.edu

Wood goodness! Ken Smith Basses brought a few of their choice 5- and 6-strings. kensmithbasses.com

La Bella may be best known for strings, but its new Olinto bass—modeled after an early-'60s P-Bass—was a big hit at the show. labella.com

Steve Bailey—flanked by BP Lifetime Achievement Award winners Alphonso Johnson and Leland Sklar—hold court in the Warwick room, which hosted performances all weekend long. warwick.de

Lemur Music brought the boom to the room with a number of exquisite upright basses. lemurmusic.com

In a building rocked to its foundation by low-end rumble, Chance Wilder Onody brought welcome upper-register melodies to the NS Designs booth. thinkns.com

Musicians Institute Bass Program Director Stuart Hamm played host to dozens of MI faculty and students, keeping the jams going all weekend long. mi.edu

SOUNDROOM

Ibanez ATK805E Premium

BY E.E. BRADMAN

"EVERY STYLE. EVERY SONG. EVERY NIGHT."

Quite a ballsy claim, isn't it? In a world run by over-zealous marketing directors and over-the-top hype, a manufacturer could be forgiven for promising an instrument that could cover all the bases. Besides, who wants to be a plain ol' workhorse when you could be a dazzling unicorn? But I'll be darned if Ibanez's ATK805E isn't the sexiest "jack of all trades" I've ever played. This lightweight, active 5-string doesn't just present itself as an everyday workhorse—it excels in that role.

When Ibanez first introduced the ATK ("attack") series with the 4-string ATK300 and 5-string ATK305 in 1995, the large body, big triple-coil pickup, and massive bridge helped give it a cult following. The company retired the 300-series ATK basses in 1999, following it

SPECIFICATIONS

IBANEZ ATK805E PREMIUM

Street $800
Bottom line Lightweight, distinctive looking, affordable, and ridiculously versatile, the ATK805E is a genre-hopping bass player's best friend, earning it a coveted Bass Player Editor Award.

Contact ibanez.com

TECH SPECS

Body Ash
Neck Maple
Fingerboard Maple
Bridge ATK 5
Bridge pickup CAP Double Humbucker 5
Neck pickup CAP Sonic Arch 5
Tuning keys Hipshot Ultralites
Scale length 34"
Width at nut 1.77"
Weight 9 lbs
String spacing 18mm
Finish Walnut flat
Made in Indonesia

up in 2003 with the Japan-only ATK1300-OK, the first ATK-series instrument to feature a single-coil pickup in neck position. It wasn't until 2007 that the ATK750 brought a single-coil pickup in neck position to an ATK sold in the U.S. The current ATK catalog includes the ATK1200 Prestige 4-string, which is the top of the line, as well as the new ATK800E 4-string and ATK805E 5-string.

The ATK805E is less than half the price of the 1200, but it shares the same specs, the same ATK N3 preamp, and the same CAP Double Humbucker 5 in bridge position and CAP Sonic Arch near the neck; the main difference is that the 805E is only available with a dark ash body and maple neck, while the 1200 comes with a natural finish. (The "E" on the model number denotes that this bass comes with a deluxe gigbag.) The "Premium" in this model's name connotes closer attention to detail, and indeed, the fretwork was excellent, the 5-bolt neck pocket was tight, and the electronics cavity was clean and well-organized. The battery is in its own pocket, accessible by a hinged door.

The ATK805E preserves many of the highlights of its predecessors: The tuners, 34" scale, 3-piece maple neck, truss-rod adjustment wheel at the base of the neck, black dot inlays, 3-band tone controls, and 22 jumbo frets will all be familiar to ATK fans. Because the 800-series basses have new pickups and a new preamp, Ibanez tested various positions for the pickup placement and decided to move the front pickup—then a single-coil, now a humbucker in a single-coil-size casing—a little farther from the fingerboard than it was in the ATK750. It's obvious that the folks at Ibanez have put lots of thought into each incarnation of the ATK, and the 800-series instruments benefit from everything they've learned so far.

ATTACK IT!

In action, the ATK805E was a joy to play and hear. Our review bass, just over nine pounds, arrived set up well with .045-.130 D'Addarios; the ATK 5 bridge is string-through-body only. The *B* was defined but a bit loose for my taste, and I couldn't help wondering whether a .135 *B* might be tighter and clearer. The rosewood pickguard, a high-end touch, seemed to blend in from a distance, but upon closer inspection, I noticed that it was a slightly lighter shade than the body's walnut finish; eventually, the pickguard bore the scuffs of my playing, and I can only imagine how pick players might scar it.

Thanks to its light ash body, the body was resonant even before I'd plugged it in, and once I heard it through a powered Bergantino IP112 1x12 cab with an Alembic preamp, I appreciated how the ATK N3 preamp, flexible but not overpowering, amplified the bass's natural tone. I also noticed some serious sustain, which I attribute to the ash body, big bridge, and strings through the body. The bass was well balanced, with no neck dive. The neck felt chunky, and the string spacing—widened from 16.5mm on older ATK 5-strings to 18mm on the ATK805E—helped make it a pleasure to slap when I joined an impromptu rock jam while plugged into a Yamaha PB-1 preamp, QSC RMX 2450 power amp, and two Acme Low-B2 2x10 cabinets.

The ATK805E arrived just in time for a rehearsal and gig with a five-piece that required me to be able to quickly access punk and ska flavors, deep dub, and

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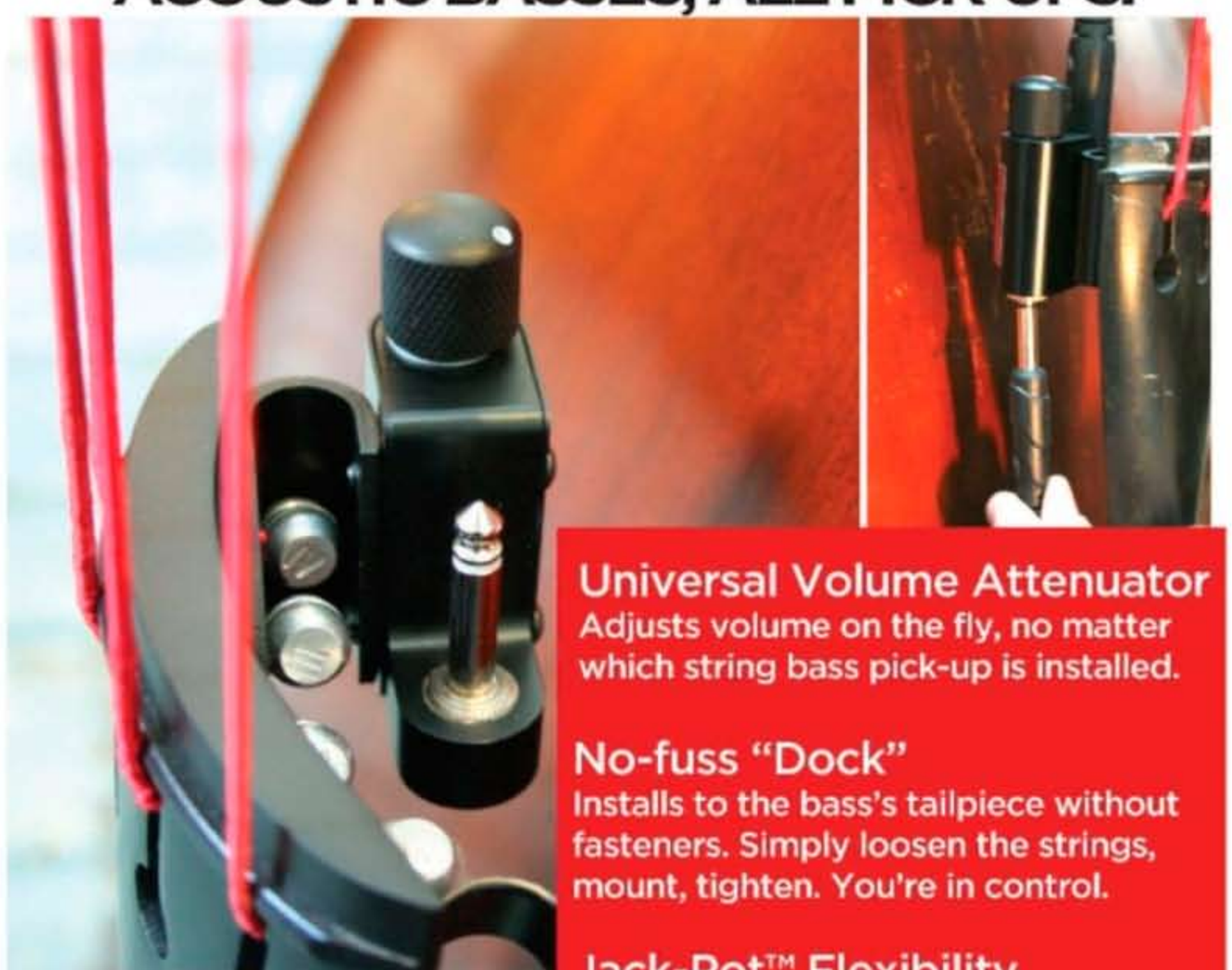
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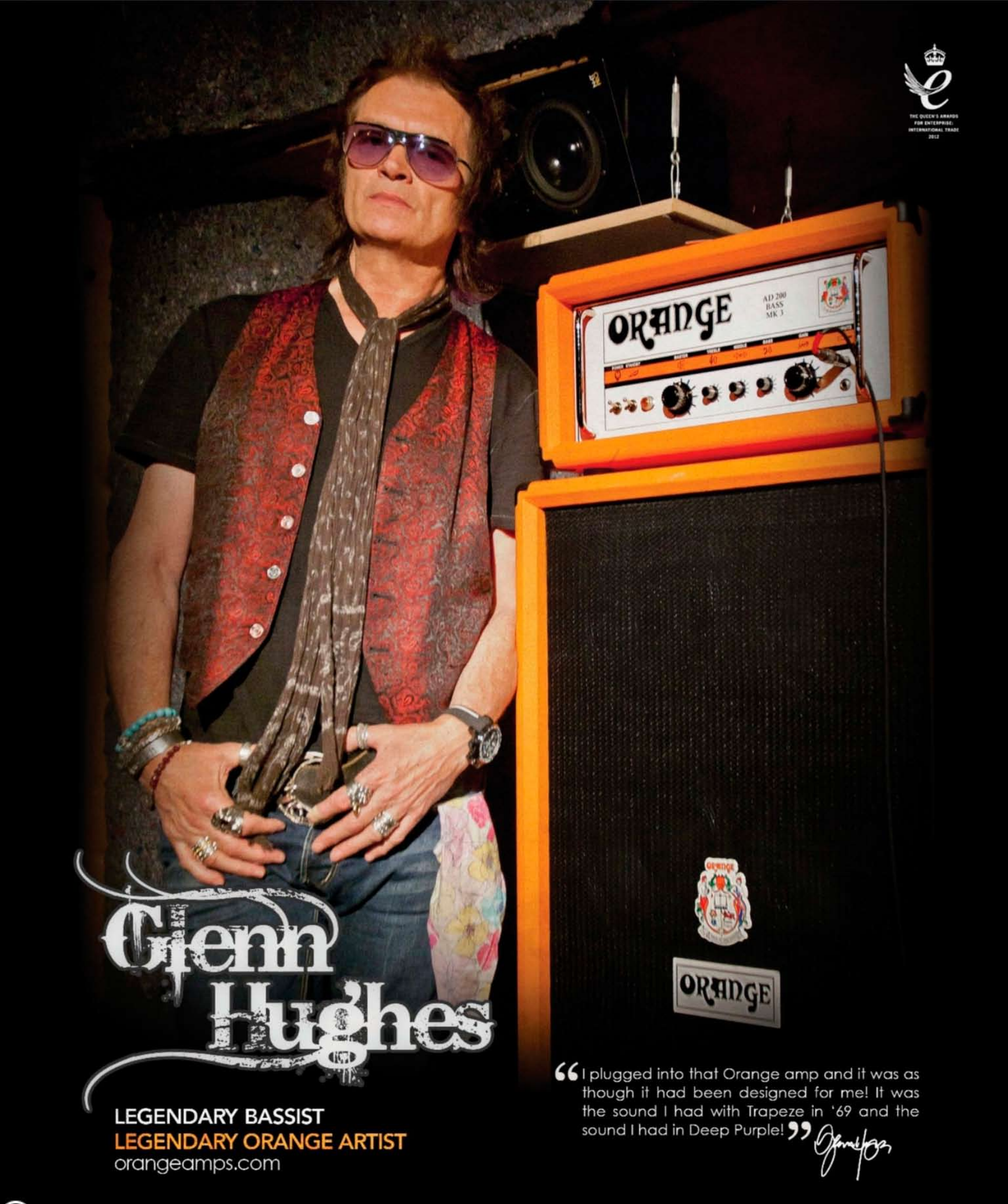
THE QUEEN'S AWARDS FOR ENTERPRISE: INTERNATIONAL TRADE 2012
ORANGE
AD 200 BASS MK 3
Glenn Hughes
ORANGE
"I plugged into that Orange amp and it was as though it had been designed for me! It was the sound I had with Trapeze in '69 and the sound I had in Deep Purple!"
LEGENDARY BASSIST
LEGENDARY ORANGE ARTIST
orangeamps.com

strong slap tone. Using the big humbucker's coil selector in tandem with the pickup blend knob allows for the widest variety of tones, and the ATK805E easily fulfilled my every need. The three-position selector switch chooses between the rear coil, both coils, and front coil of the big humbucker. Pointing it toward the bridge and dialing in the back pickup with the blend knob, for example, got me pretty close to a well-defined back-pickup Jazz Bass sound, which worked well when I needed to cut through the guitar line and percussion. With the switch in the middle, the pickup selector aimed toward the neck, and some careful tone sculpting, I could recall a tone close to a Music Man, but the ATK805E seems to forego the classic StingRay grunt and sizzly top end for something stronger in the low mids. Setting the blend knob in the middle and pushing the switch forward, which highlighted the little humbucker and the big humbucker nearest the neck, gave me lots of warmth; with a few tweaks of the tone knobs, I could go from vaguely P-Bass murk to sine-wave, dub-ready territory.

Plugged into an Acoustic B600 head and 8x10 cabinet during rehearsal, the ATK805E was huge and warm; despite my doubts, DI through the monitors and the backline at that night's gig—a Markbass 102P 2x10 combo, all tone controls set flat—was plenty loud, well defined, and warm enough to fill the room with dub when necessary. In the moment, the big neck, the spacing, the sustain, and the strong tone seemed to encourage whole notes: Although slap lines, picked parts, and fast fingerstyle all sounded good on the ATK805E, something about this bass made me want to play big notes.

It's perhaps inevitable that some players will be tempted to compare the ATK805E to other classic, modern humbucker-and-single-coil combinations. The comparison makes sense visually and may be a good place to start, but the more I played, the more I understood that this bass's mix of elements—its bridge, maple neck, ash body, and distinctive pickups—combine to give it a character all its own. Like the greatest and most verstile sidemen, the ATK805E excels at being whatever you want it be. **BP**

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Tech 21
VT Bass 1969 & B410-VT

BY BRIAN FOX

TO MANY OF US, THE ULTIMATE IN OLD-school soul and rock & roll bass tone was codified back in the 1960s and hasn't changed a whole lot since; hand a dude like me a P-Bass and the choice of an Ampeg B-15 combo or SVT stack, and watch him settle into hours of blissed-out riff-and-groove noodling. For twenty-some years, Tech 21 NYC has been building amps and pedals—the popular SansAmp Bass Driver DI among them—that seek to satisfy those of us infatuated with the fat, tubby, tube-y tones of yesteryear. The company's new VT Bass 1969 essentially takes the guts of one of its popular stompboxes, the VT Bass, and pairs it with a power amp that pushes 345

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watts through a 4Ω load. For testing, Tech 21 sent the head along with a matching B410-VT cabinet.

VT BRUISER

For the VT Bass 1969, Tech 21 elected to stack two identical channels, switchable via a button on the head or the included footswitch. The two channels can also be blended together, but more on that in a minute. The head's BASS, MID, and TREBLE active EQ controls offer 12dB of boost/cut at well-spec'd frequencies; it's a straightforward system that makes it easy to scoop or boost according to taste. The heart of the head, however, lies in how its GAIN, CHARACTER, and LEVEL controls interact. The LEVEL and GAIN controls are self-explanatory, with LEVEL setting the overall volume and GAIN dialing in a degree of grit. The CHARACTER knob functions much like the tone knob on a passive bass; roll it back for a darker color, and boost past noon for full-frequency fizz. The interplay of the CHARACTER and GAIN controls makes for a dizzying array of tones, from dark and thumping (GAIN at noon, CHARACTER down low) to midrange-rich and throbbing (both knobs at noon) to piercing and punishing (both cranked). Pushing to extremes, the VT Bass 1969 is powerful enough for all but the biggest stages.

The VT Bass 1969's two switchable—and blendable—channels make a number of things possible: set one channel clean, one dirty; with matching EQ and GAIN/CHARACTER settings, make channel 2 a bit hotter and switch for a volume boost; blend the clean and dirty channels for a signal that preserves the low end and still offers sufficient fizz. In all, it's a pretty slick system that I'm surprised we don't see more of.

Designed as a complement to the VT Bass 1969 head, the B-410 VT is a worthy partner. Owing to its two rear ports and tweeter-less design, the cab is about as compact a conventional 4x10 as you can

SPECIFICATIONS

TECH 21

VT Bass 1969
Street $1,050
Bottom line Tech 21's VT Bass 1969 makes it easy to dial in anything from vintage thump to modern crunch, and the ability to switch between—or blend—channels makes an otherwise great amp downright badass.

V410-VT
Street $765
Bottom line Classic looks, rugged build, and faultless performance make the V410-VT a worthy partner to the VT Bass 1969.

Contact tech21nyc.com

TECH SPECS

VT Bass 1969
Power rating 345 watts @ 4ff
Controls Channel selector switch, GAIN button (+10db) For each channel: DRIVE, CHARACTER, BASS (312dB @ 125Hz), MID (312dB @ 500Hz), TREBLE (312dB @ 3.2kHz), LEVEL;
Rear panel jacks Two Speakon, two ¼" speaker (wired parallel, 4ff minimum load); XLR direct out (with ground/lift and -10dB pad); ¼" FOOTSWITCH, POWER AMP INPUT, PRE-AMP INPUT, and TUNER OUTPUT jacks.
Footswich Channel select, MIX (blends both channels), MUTE
Rackmount hardware Included
Dimensions 17" x 3.5" x 16" (two rack-space)
Weight 21 lbs
Made in U.S.A.

B410-VT
Cabinet design Dual rear ports
Power handling 400 watts
Impedance 8ff
Drivers Four custom-designed 10"
Jacks One Speakon, one ¼"
Dimensions 24" x 24" x 16"
Weight 70 lbs
Made in U.S.A.

find, and at 70 pounds, it isn't unbearably awkward to tote around town. The cabinet's hard vinyl cover seems pretty scratch-, dent- and rip-resistant. My only gripe is that the VT Bass 1969 had a tendency to slide around on the cab's slick top.

Those familiar with Tech 21's various SansAmp and Character Series pedals will find lots to love in the VT Bass 1969 rig, and those unfamiliar are likely to eat up what the company has cooked up. If you're looking for a versatile, powerful, straightforward rig with righteous vintage and modern sounds and the ability to switch and blend the two, get hip to Tech 21's trip. It just might blow your mind, man! **BP**

JAZZ CONCEPTS

"Can You Guys, Uh … Play Better?"

Tetrachords, Part 2

BY JOHN GOLDSBY

MANY YEARS AGO, I WORKED FOR A BANDLEADER WHO WOULD occasionally turn around to the rhythm section and say, "Can you guys, uh … play better?" Even though he was a jerk and our rhythm section was solid, we would still nod and act as if we were bearing down, doing our best to play better. We probably sounded just the same. I learned from experience that musicians don't play better just because someone tells them to do so.

In contrast to that guy with his unique style of psycho-bandleading, I worked with some very nice bandleaders and teachers along the way, like the Louisville guitarist Jeff Sherman. One lesson that I gathered from Mr. Sherman was extremely useful and cleverly delivered: He told me simply to "play what sounds good." Actually, he explained that chord/scale theory is helpful, but if I used my ears, I could find the notes that fit a particular chord without analyzing the progression theoretically. He taught me to trust my ears and always go for "what sounds good" first, regardless of music theory. Then he taught me the chord/scale theory to explain *why* it sounded good.

Mr. Sherman, who still teaches a gaggle of guitar and bass students, suggested that when a new chord appears in a progression, I could just change the notes in my line to fit the sound of the new chord, rather than worry about whether a new scale is (for example) Dorian minor, Mixolydian, or diminished whole-tone. When playing a bass line or solo on a chord progression, the line should just describe the important notes that change from measure to measure.

Take a look at the first four bars of **Example 1**, an étude based on the harmony of the Tadd Dameron jazz standard "Ladybird." The solo line starts on the 5th of the *Cmaj7* chord (the note *G*), and moves up in a tetrachord. Remember from last time that a tetrachord is a group of four notes, usually within an interval of a 4th. In this case, the line starts with a major tetrachord (whole-step, whole-step, half-step). You can think of this theoretically as one half of a scale.

In bars 3 and 4, the chords change to *Fm7* and *B♭7*. Starting on the note *F*, the line moves up and down a minor tetrachord (whole-step, half-step, whole-step). By changing the notes *A* and *B* on the *Cmaj7* to the notes *A♭* and *B♭* on the *Fm7* to *B♭7*, the line accurately describes the change of harmony from *Cmaj7* to *Fm7*. You might have found a similar solo solution by using your ears, even if you had never played this chord progression before.

INFO

JOHN GOLDSBY

Visit John Goldsby's website for sound files, videos, and bass-related material.
johngoldsby.com

CONNECT

- Learn more about tetrachords on Michael Furstner's jazz theory blog.
- Watch trumpet guru John McNeil talk about tetrachords and how to practice them.
- Discuss tetrachords and other lofty topics with John Goldsby and the cool bass-playing folks on the MusicPlayer Lowdown Forum.

bassplayer.com/january2013

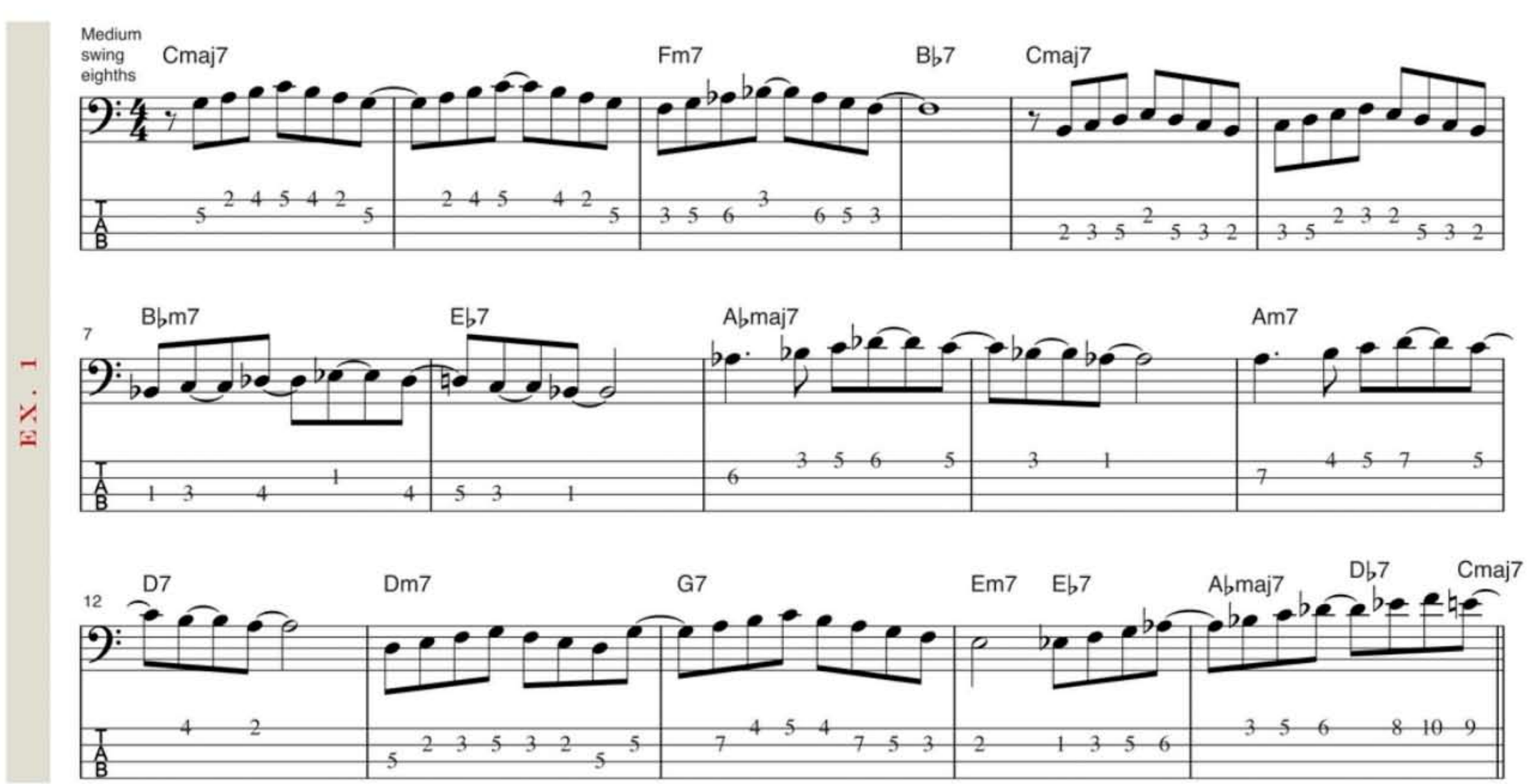
In bar 5, the line starts on the note *B*, and moves up to *E*. This is technically called a Phrygian tetrachord (half-step, whole-step, whole-step), but you don't really need to worry about that. If it sounds good, it sounds good. Since the four-note line is framed by chord tones (*B* and *E*) of the *Cmaj7*, the line sounds very melodic.

As the étude moves through the harmony of "Ladybird," in most cases the line starts on the root of each chord and moves up and down four notes. In bars 15–16, the last two bars of the progression (i.e., the turnaround), the chords change every two beats. One elegant solution here is to play a major tetrachord starting on the root of each chord. Since the chords move up in 4ths (*E♭7*, *A♭maj7*, *D♭7*), the line follows seamlessly.

By now, you might be thinking that this seems overly theoretical. But music theory is the language we use to describe why something works musically. When you use your ears to find a good-sounding bass line or solo, there is always a way to analyze your choice theoretically and talk about it in theoretical language. The obverse side of this—and a common pitfall for music students—is that bass lines and solos that are only conceived theoretically sometimes sound bad. The best approach is to use your ears, but also use the left side of your brain to understand the theory behind your choices.

Here's an intuitive way to experiment with tetrachords while super-charging your ability to hear choice notes: Take a chord progression that you know, start on any chord tone, and move up and down four notes of any tetrachord, using your ear to guide you to the best notes. Do this out of time, or at a very slow tempo. It might help to use a play-along track, MIDI track, or the iReal Book to hear the harmony. Play up and down any four notes, and adjust to fit the sound of the chord. Don't worry about what to call the four notes you are playing; the theoretical name of the tetrachord or scale you are using is just a description. You should train your ears to choose the notes that sound good to you. You can analyze the theory behind the line *after* your ear guides you to the best notes. On some chords, there might be several combinations of notes that work well.

There are two types of bassists: Some players want to know the precise music theory behind the notes they play, and other players just want to play by ear and feel. There are great musicians in both camps. Whichever type of bassist you are, always heed the advice: "Play what sounds good!" **BP**



BLUES YOU CAN USE

Rhythmic Fun With The Shuffle

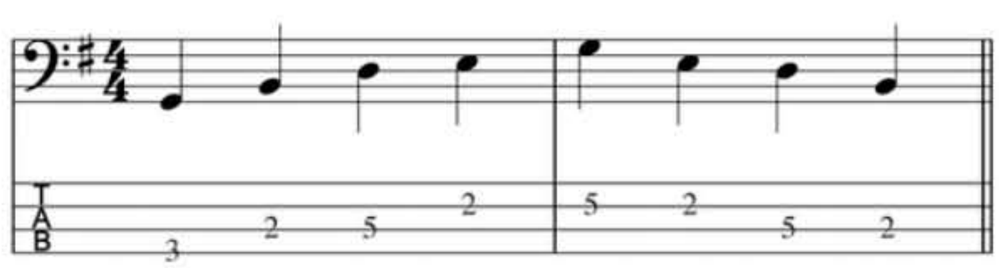
BY ED FRIEDLAND

THIS MONTH, I'M GOING TO PRESENT SOMETHING very different. The examples shown here are not something I recommend you try to play on a blues gig—unless you want to get fired real quick! Instead, look at them as rhythmic training tools—the more control you have over the shuffle rhythm, the better you can do your job when it comes to playing it straight. These patterns came about from a hang session with a drummer friend of mine here in Austin, Herb Belofsky. Herb and I play mostly Texas country/honky-tonk gigs together, and he's a highly skilled and inventive player. We were messing around with a standard shuffle blues pattern, but for fun, we started shifting the accent to different parts of the eighth-note triplet. For us bassists, naturally, the normal approach would be to play on each quarter-note's downbeat, as in **Ex. 1**. Nothing new there; this is how you're supposed to play.

Maybe it was too many Lone Star beers, but suddenly I shifted the bass note from the downbeat to the second beat of the triplet, while Herb kept a steady shuffle pattern on the drums. This is whack, to say the least—*don't* try this on the gig, or they'll put your ass on the last train to Clarksville. But, try **Ex. 2** at home and see how stable you can get with this very unorthodox approach. The key is being able to feel the missing downbeat in relation to your upbeat. It's unsettling at first—this is not what you are used to doing, but with a strong internal reference to the downbeat, you can learn to settle in this very odd place and get comfortable—the musical equivalent of the early-20th-century fad of flagpole sitting, perhaps.

Example 3 takes this concept one step further and displaces the bass note to the 3rd beat of the eighth-note triplet. You might think putting the bass note that much further

EX. 1



INFO

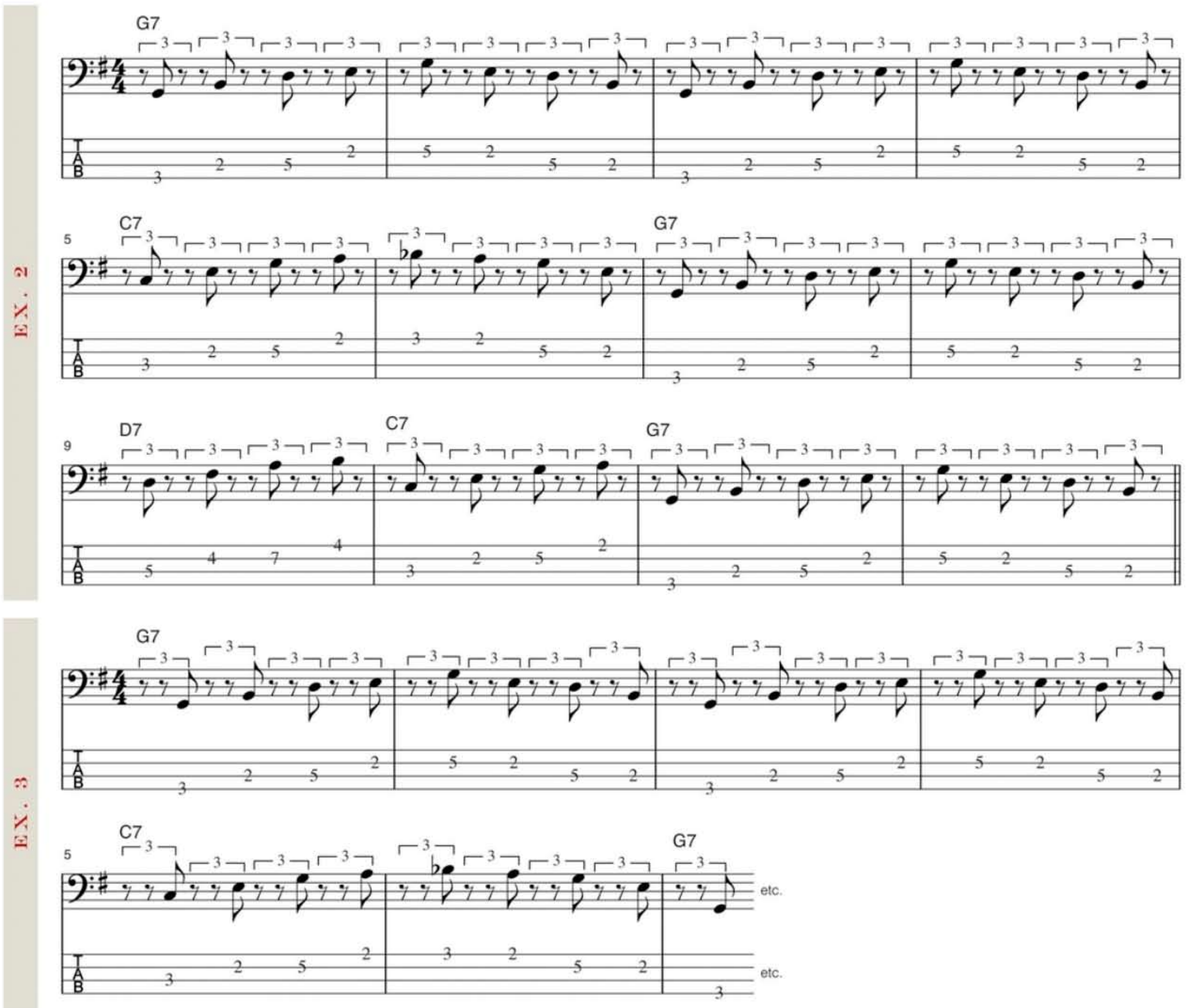
ED FRIEDLAND

From his bass base in Austin, Texas, Ed Friedland keeps his chops up by writing instructional books and playing in a number of blues, country, and jazz groups. Find more at **edfriedland.com**.

from the downbeat would make it even trickier to settle in to this pattern, but it's actually easier. The third beat of the triplet is familiar to us as the upbeat played by the guitar in a "flat tire" or "backwards" shuffle. Try this: First sing the triplet rhythm as "chick-a-da, chick-a-da," etc. Now, leave "chick-a" blank, and put your bass note on "da." Singing rhythms can be very helpful with internalizing the feel. Do this for a while, and when you feel comfortable, play **Ex. 3** to the end of the 12-bar pattern.

So, what is the point of learning how to do something as impractical as this? The point is rhythmic mastery. While not something you'll play on the gig (have you noticed how many times I've said this? If you get fired, it's not my fault!), we are examining the areas of the shuffle rhythm that bassists rarely visit. If you can learn to live in these zones, away from the comforting thud of the downbeat, just think how much more that downbeat will mean when you do play it. Give these examples a good shot; most likely you won't be able to nail them on the first try, but don't give up—it's fun! **BP**

EX. 2



EX. 3

Outfit the Band

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TRANSCRIPTION

Tom Scholz (seated) and Boston in Tom's Wayland, Massachusetts studio, 1978.

"Hitch A Ride" By Boston

Tom Scholz' Complete Bass Line

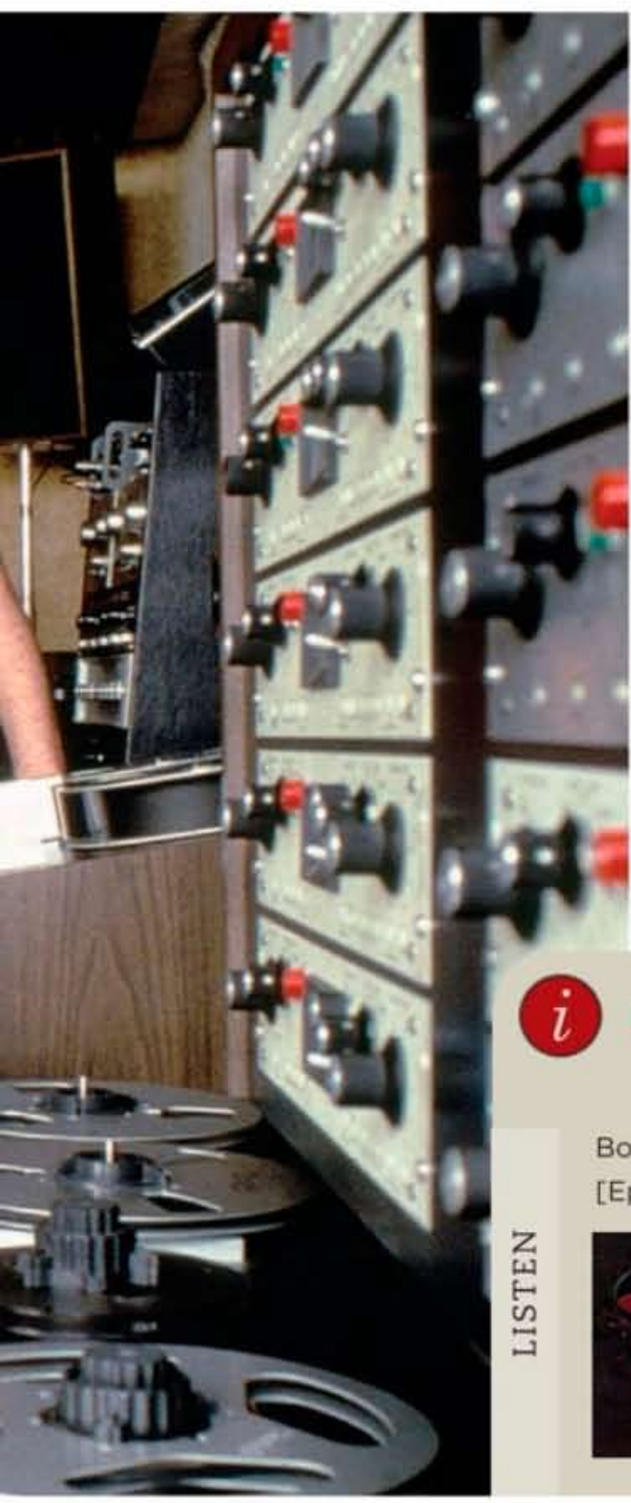
BY BRIAN FOX | PHOTO BY RON POWNALL

JUST ANOTHER BAND OUT OF BOSTON? HARDLY. LIFTED by vocalist Brad Delp's pipes and powered by mastermind Tom Scholz' triple-threat talent as a songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and engineer, Boston rose to the top of the rock charts with its self-titled debut in 1976. With such classic rock radio staples as "More Than A Feeling," "Peace of Mind," Rock and Roll Band," and "Smokin,'" it's no wonder *Boston* is among the best-selling debut albums of all time. This month, we take a look at "Hitch A Ride," another gem from the album that demonstrates Scholz' abiding love for the low end.

How did you write the bass line for "Hitch A Ride?"

For me, the songwriting process and the bass line are kind of unrelated. Typically, songs come to me in two parts. I come up with the accompanying music first. That's a little ironic, because back in the old days, it was all about the melody and the lyrics; the accompanying music didn't count. But I would come up with the lick, the chord changes, and the rhythm on piano, organ, or guitar, and then I would come up with the melody. After I heard that on tape, I would write the lyrics. Drums, bass, and various accompanying instruments were later add-ons to complete the arrangement. On "Hitch A Ride," I recorded stereo acoustic guitar tracks and drums by my old friend Jim Masdea, and then I'd play along with it on bass, trying various things until I stumbled onto something that I liked.

When I play bass to one of my songs, there will be a few repeating parts here or there, but I seldom play the same thing twice. I'll play the part on a chorus, for instance, and then the verse will come up and I'll work on ideas for that. But when the next chorus comes up, I'll have forgotten what I did before. Especially on bass, I always have a lot more ideas than I can possibly cram into the arrangement for a given song. I'm always trying to rein myself in when I'm playing bass.



INFO

LISTEN

Boston, *Boston* [Epic, 1976]

What do you try to accomplish in a bass line?

My objective is to not be too constrained, but I draw the line at stepping on a vocal or lead instrument. I'm trying to complement the rhythm guitars, piano, or organ, making sure not to get in the way of the thing most people are going to key into when they initially hear a song. With that in mind, I basically turn myself loose. I always sit down and listen in great detail over and over again when I'm recording bass, and I'll often have to go back and play the bass part a little simpler. So for those who think the Boston bass lines were busy, they were a lot busier before I edited!

My goal was always to experiment as much as possible, and then save the things that I really liked. Most of the lines you hear on most Boston recordings capture the first time I put that particular sequence of notes together.

The emotion you put into a part, which shows up in the way you play the actual notes—the timing, the various techniques for beginning and ending them—is often more important than being particularly exact. My approach is always to experiment in a format or environment where you can keep what you just played.

What bass gear did you use to record "Hitch A Ride?"

I basically used the gear that turned out to be the prototype for the Bass Rockman headphone unit I designed and sold through Scholz Research & Development, the company I used to run years ago. It consists of considerable EQ before a compressor; I always used an RMS sensing compressor with a very fast release time. I would always have some means for smooth clipping of the signal in front. Then it would go through a second stage of EQ.

My particular bass guitar was a Gibson EB-0. I had a machinist friend chew out a chunk in the middle of the body so I could mount a Jazz Bass pickup in a very specific spot, trying to accentuate the second harmonic. The second and third harmonics are what I liked to get off the strings. I always ran it to tape very hot, intentionally saturating the tape to get that very complementary third-harmonic distortion that recording to tape provides.

I mostly played with a pick on the first Boston album. I just like the way it sounds. I would take some care not to get a lot of pick noise on the recording, and I would occasionally play with my fingers on softer parts of a song. I always used Rotosound strings back then.

What are some of the techniques you've picked up when recording bass?

I try to avoid playing open strings on bass, since the timbre is quite a bit different. Also, I tend to record with the tape speed set a half-step high. It means you have to play faster to keep up, but I like what that does to the sound of the bass when I slow it back down. Sometimes I would tune the bass down and turn the tape speed up to get the sound I was after.

I always kept an old Conn Stroboconn tuner running with the instrument I was playing so I could see what was going on with tuning—especially with bass, where the harmonics are never quite on with the fundamental. Plug into an old Conn or Peterson strobo-tuners and watch what happens when you play a low string; you'll see the upper harmonics going flat and sharp, and the fundamental doing something totally different.

Who were the bass players you liked listening to in the early Boston days?

I basically learned how to play bass listening to one guy: Ron Wood on Jeff Beck's *Truth* album [Epic, 1968]. To be honest, I didn't pay much attention to any other bass players. The way he played bass was spectacular. It didn't interfere, it was really interesting, and it added a lot of motion to the songs. *Truth* was my training manual. I grew up in Toledo, Ohio, and the only thing that was on the radio in the '60s was Motown, so I heard R&B all the time. So I'm sure that's ingrained in my mind no matter what I do, as well.

Fran Sheehan, David Sikes, Kimberley Dahme, and Tracy Ferrie have all played your "Hitch A Ride" bass line live with Boston. How do their interpretations differ from yours?

Tracy Ferrie probably did the best job of capturing what was actually on the recording. I never got really picky about all those licks, because I can't even remember the ones I played!

What are some hallmarks of your particular style of bass playing?

There are certain techniques that are prevalent on the Boston albums. I hang on to notes until the bitter end—I don't chop notes off unless it's part of the arrangement, like on "Don't Look Back" or "Long Time." There aren't a lot of spaces or a lot of rests. If I slide, it's because I'm trying to add motion; it's not just because the next note happens to be up higher.

The final bass note of "Hitch A Ride" sounds like a low *D*. Would you detune your bass?

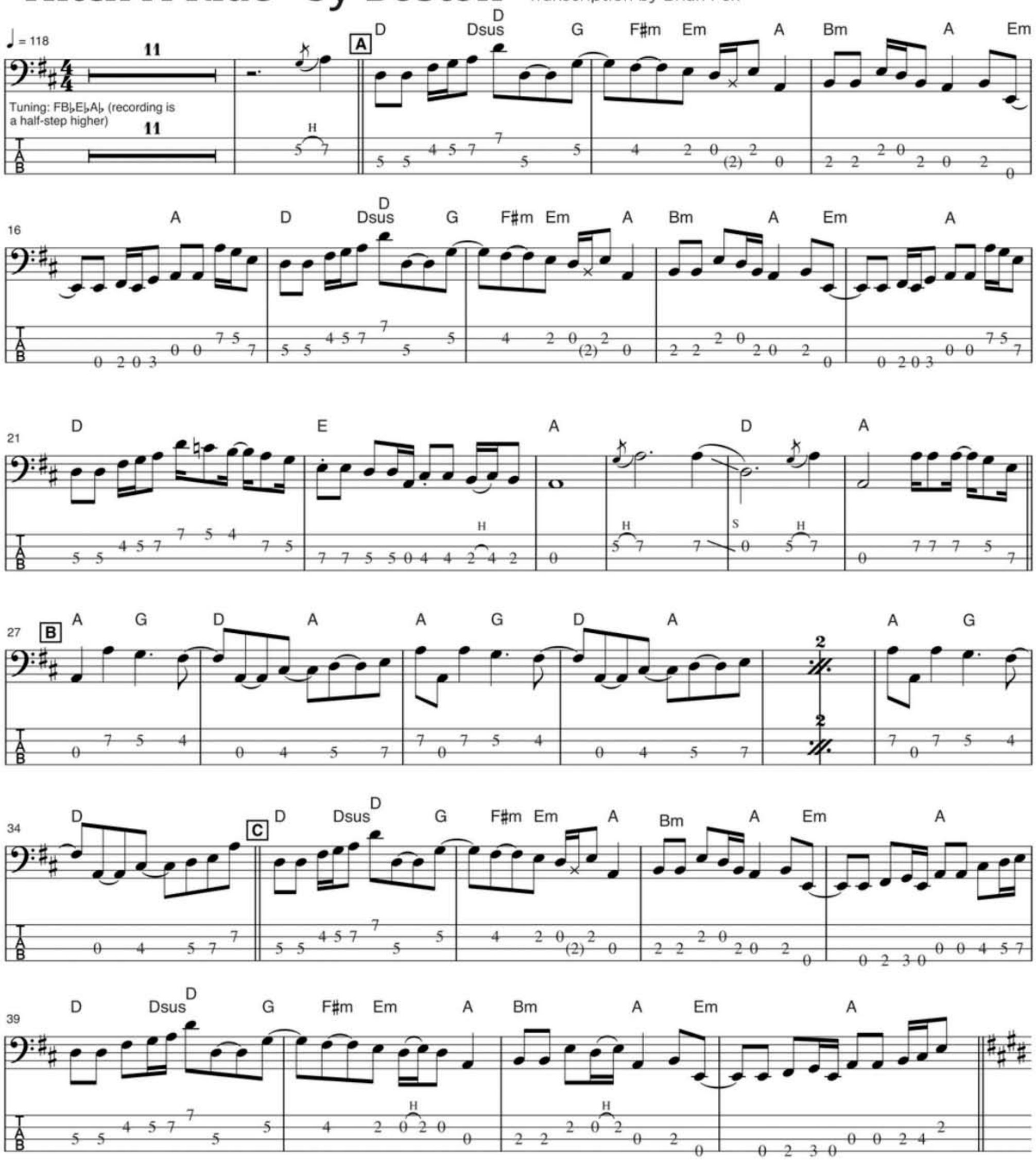
I got used to tuning the *E* string down to *D* at the spur of the moment, so I could do it on the run. You have to be a little careful when you detune, because the string can get pretty floppy; your fingering and the pressure on the string has to be a lot more accurate. No matter what you do, every note you hit is going to go sharp right when you hit it, and then it's going to go flat.

Aside from "Hitch A Ride," what are some of your favorite Boston bass lines?

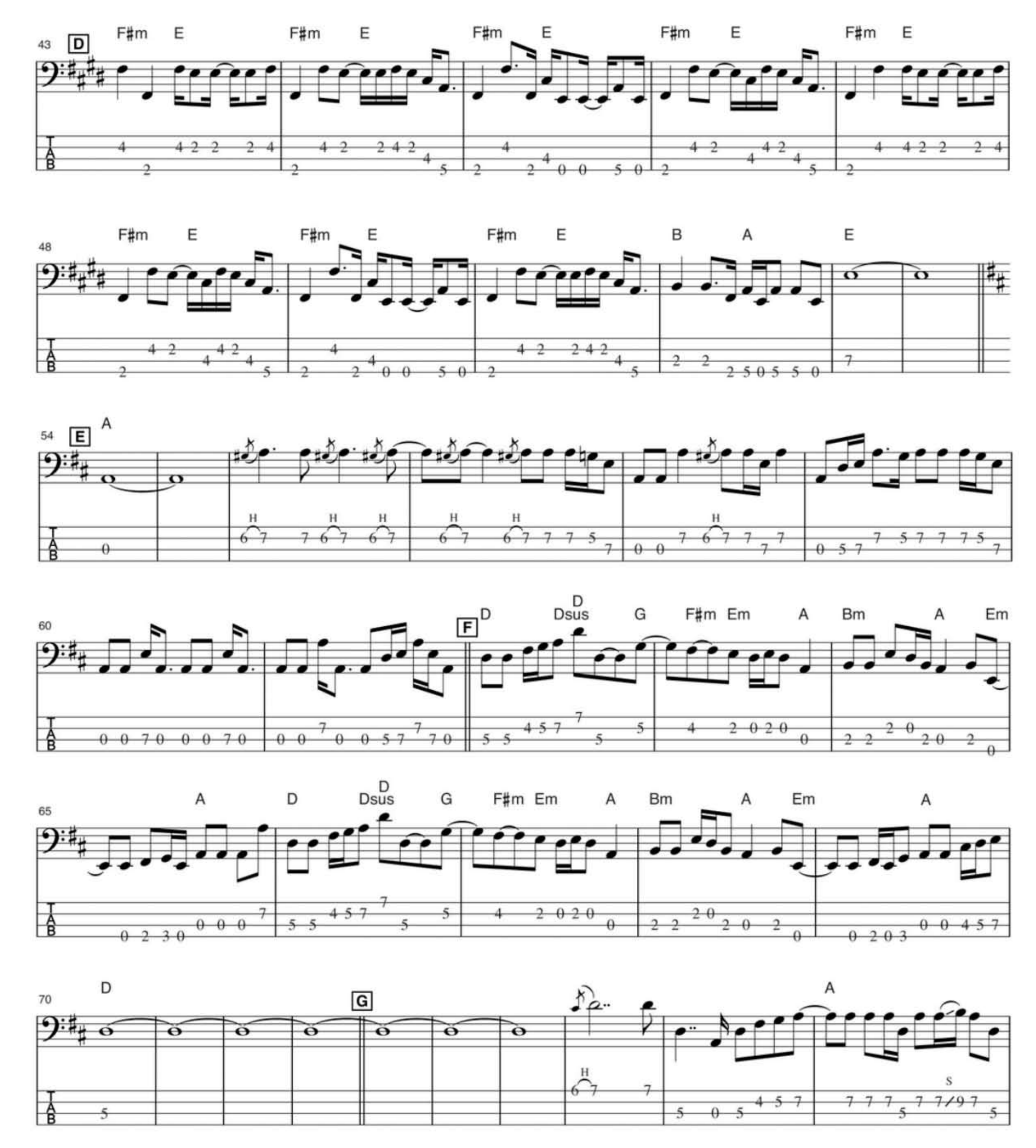
I don't want to sound self-centered, but I kind of like them all! I love to play bass. When it's time in a recording process—which for me usually goes on for several months—to start experimenting with bass lines, I get a big grin. It's my favorite thing to do. I have lots of ideas, and I basically play until my fingers start to bleed. **BP**

"Hitch A Ride" by Boston

Transcription by Brian Fox



"Hitch a Ride" by Tom Scholz. Published by Pure Songs (ASCAP). Administered by Next Decade Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission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85 D A G F♯m Em D

90 A G F♯m Em D

95 A G F♯m Em D A

100 G F♯m Em D A G F♯m Em

105 D A G F♯m Em D

110 A G F♯m Em D

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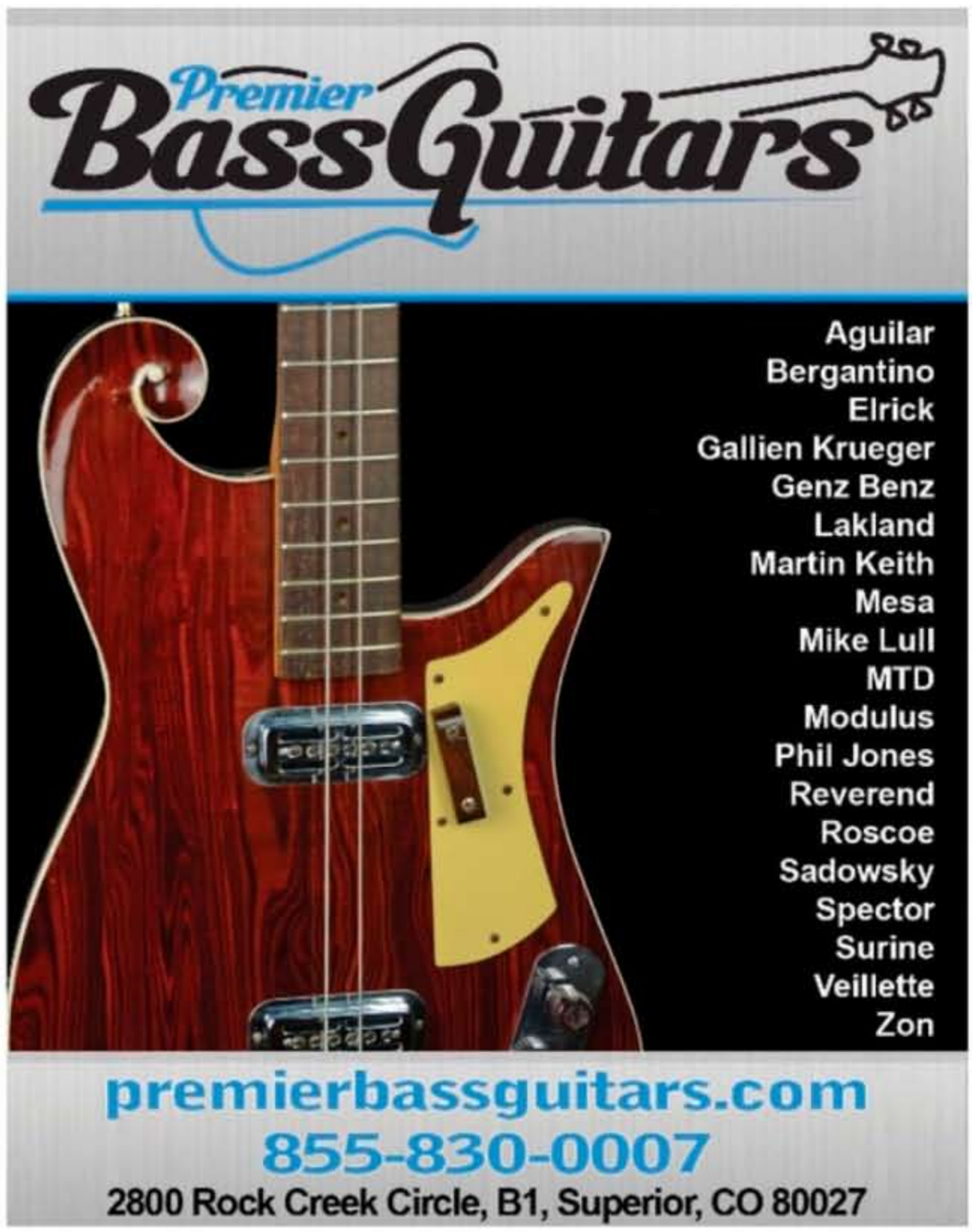

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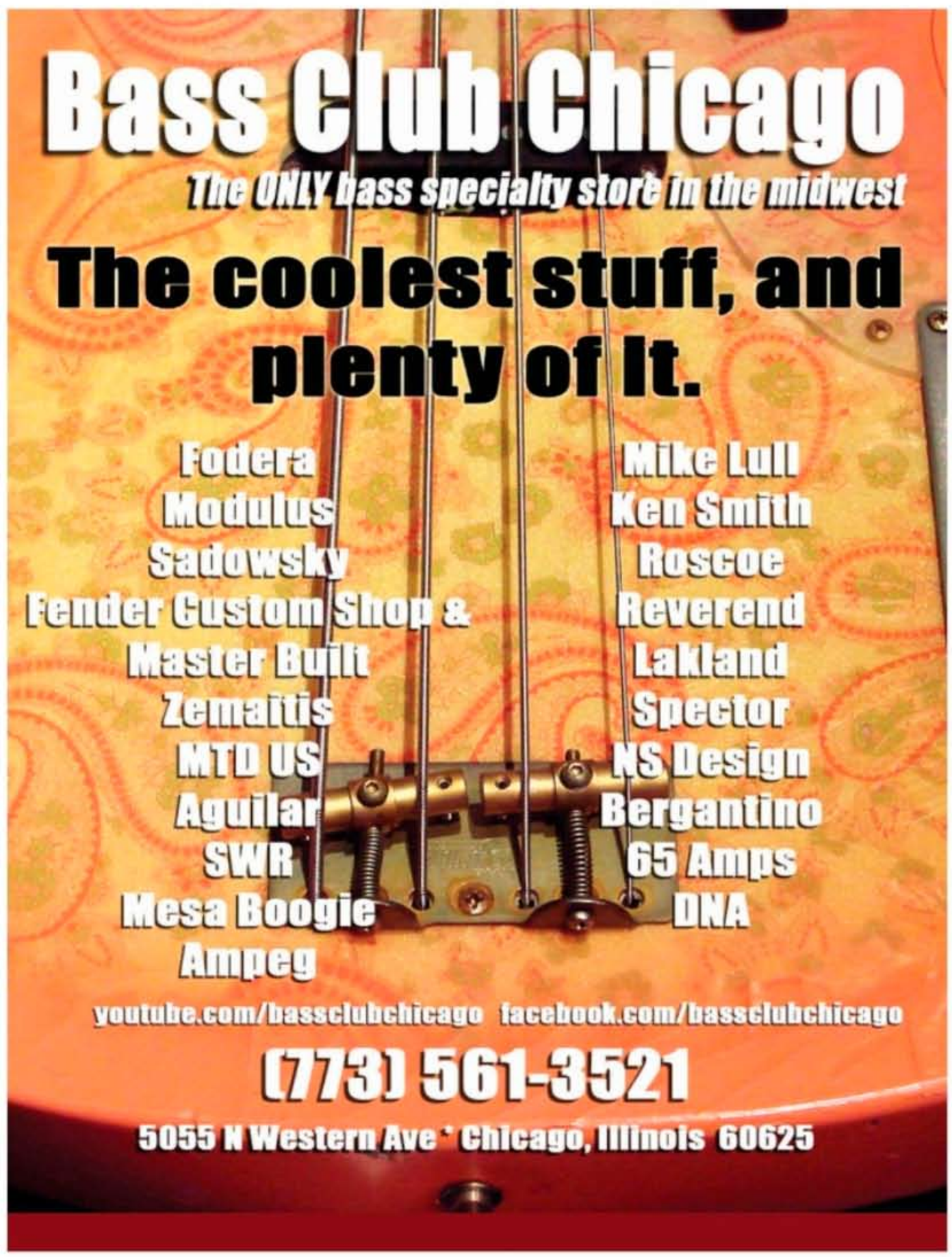

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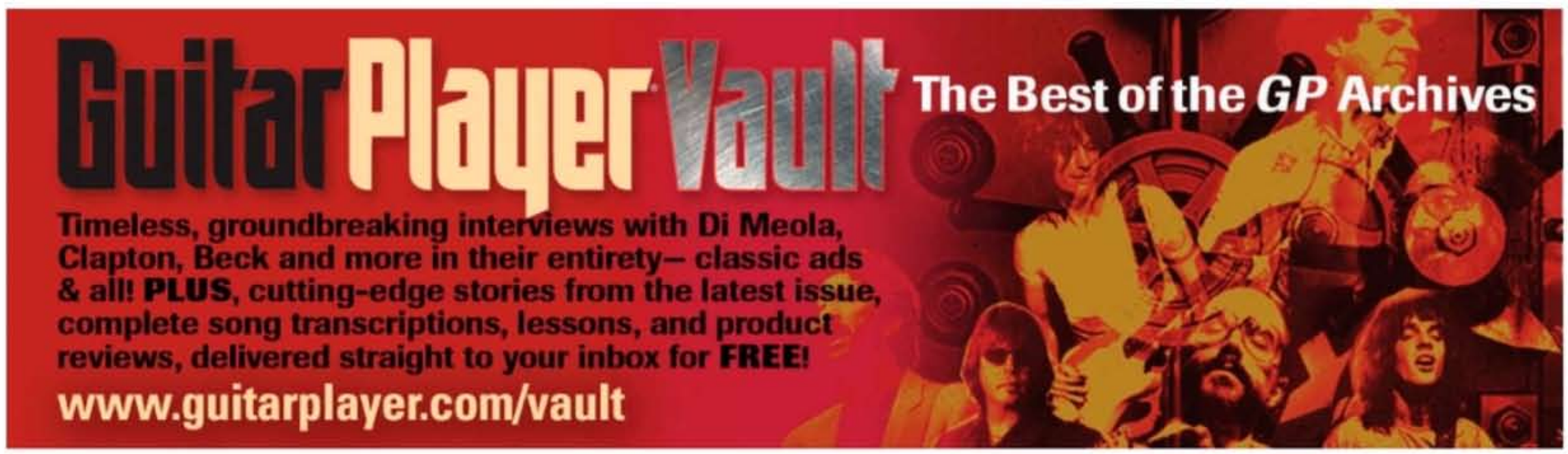

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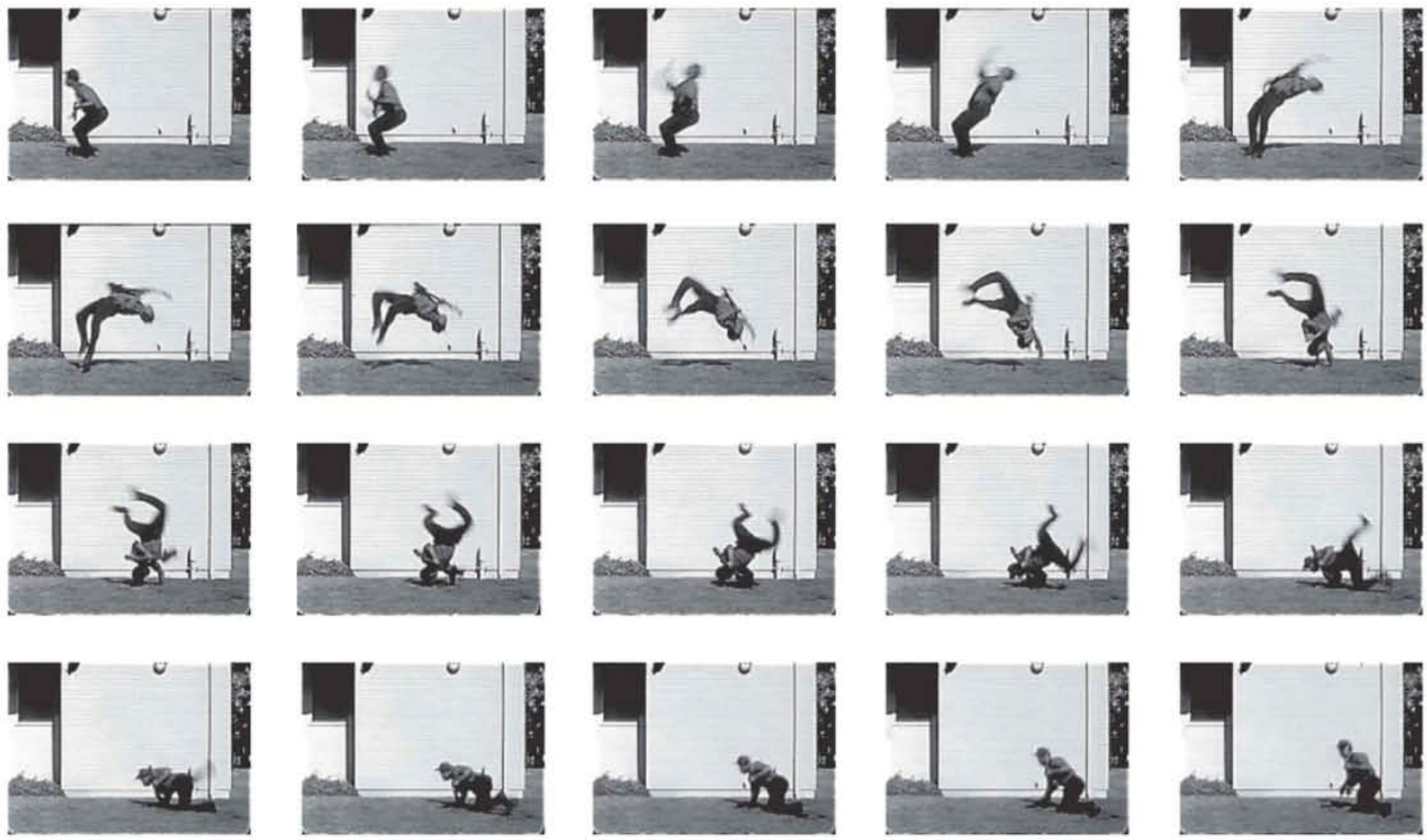
Over the past 20-plus years with Bass Player, *Art Director and photographer Paul Haggard has accumulated a shelf full of broken cameras and some dusty memories. He will recount some over the next few columns until either he can't remember any more, or they fail to be interesting—whichever comes first.*



OUTTAKES

Movie, from November 1993

AT ANY GIVEN POINT IN ONE'S LIFE, HE OR SHE GRAPPLES with justification of his or her age. The young assert the benefits of vigor, energy and strength. The old maintain that wisdom and experience supplant lost youth. In 1993 I was 34; not as yet decrepit enough to deem myself old, yet not an ignorant teen either. I was at that time brash enough with youthful energy to be able to suggest ludicrous ideas to potential subjects without the fear of their jaded rejection. Some blew me off, but others took the bait and collaborated on interesting and fun images. Fortunately for me, Victor Wooten, one of the hottest young bassists in the industry, was also brash and energetic, and reputedly would take his young zest and bravado so far as to perform backflips during concerts. I had come across this fact either as a matter of hearsay, or perhaps I had dreamed it—I can't remember which—but nevertheless, it was in my mind as I awaited his arrival at our offices. As soon as we sat down to get acquainted, I pounced on him and announced, possibly a bit overly enthusiastically, that I wanted to capture the spirit of his generation and display him doing his backflip in the pages of our magazine to both the Bass Player readership and the world. In *that* order of importance.

Victor, being not only one of the greatest bass players alive, but also one of the coolest, mulled for two seconds and said, "Um. Okay."

Please understand that had I asked an older, more mature player, the answer would have been quite different. A standing backflip, with bass, is not something for the meek to try at home. Just thinking about it as I am writing this caused my rotator cuff to separate, and Victor, in an act of flagrant verve, pulled it off without so much as a grunt.

But how to capture such a thing, you might ask?

Ah-HA! Here is where energy, and experience mingle—albeit a bit awkwardly, like me at a cocktail party. As a child, I would steal my father's Bolex 8-millimeter movie camera and film neighborhood kids doing absurd things. This technology is, by 1993's and especially today's standards, profoundly obsolete and one that only an experienced old fart would consider a plausible medium (try asking teenagers today if they know what an 8-millimeter movie is), but I somehow managed to buy some film, dragged Victor out onto the lawn, and with the very same Bolex scrounged out of a box in the garage, captured his magic on 20 tiny frames of celluloid.

The resulting series of images is, in my humble opinion, beautiful in its simplicity and reminiscent of Eadweard Muybridge's multi-camera motion studies of the late 1870s. In my limited scope of knowledge this may be the first motion picture ever to appear in a bass magazine, or quite possibly any print magazine. We have reprised it here for your viewing pleasure. Please turn to page 12 and flip fan the corner from front to back. I recommend a packet of microwave popcorn and a oversize box of Junior Mints to enjoy during the show. —PAUL HAGGARD

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